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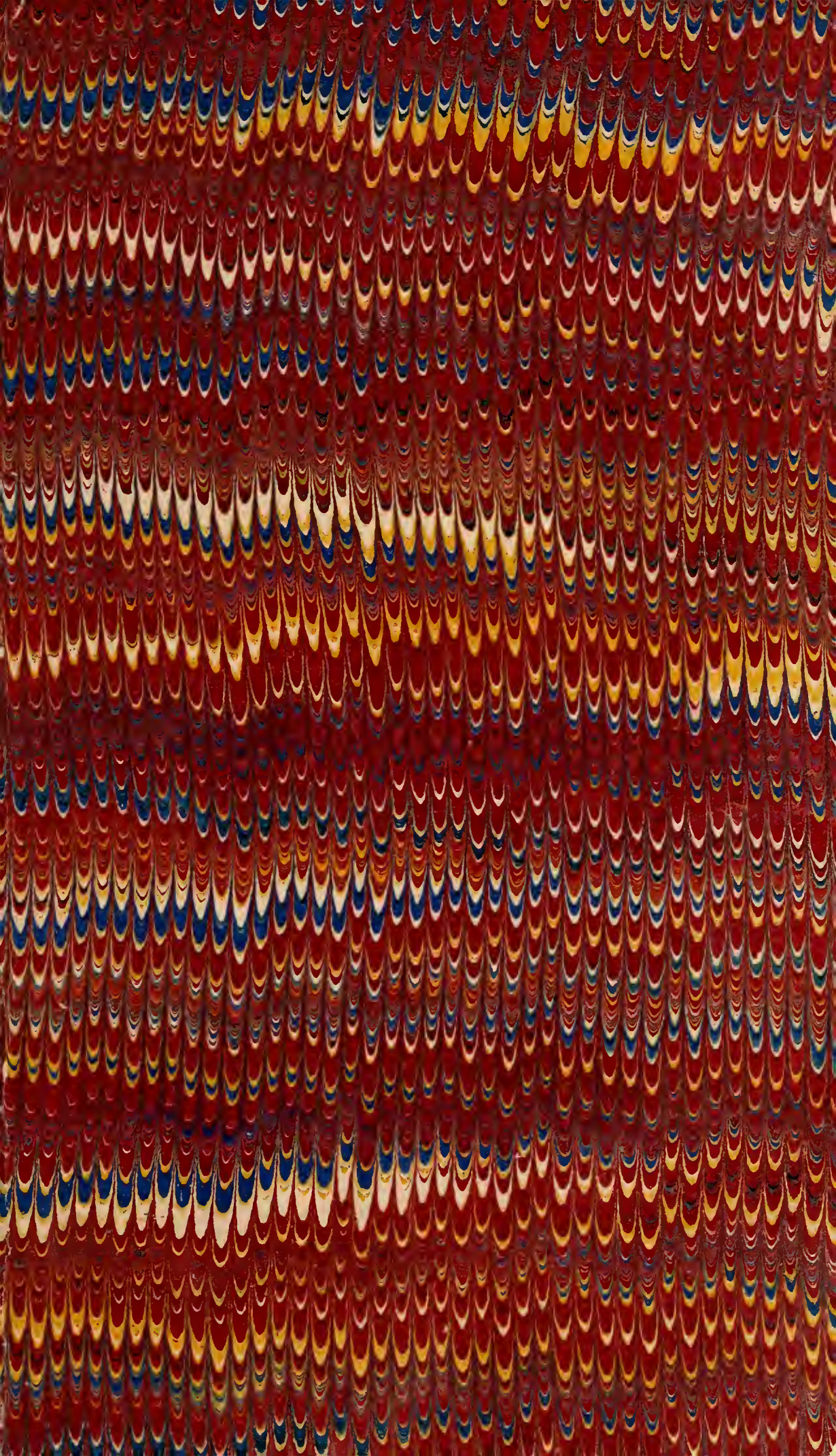

TORCH LIGHT.

AN

Examination

OF THE

ORIGIN, POLICY, AND PRINCIPLES

OF THE

OPPOSITION TO THE ADMINISTRATION,

AND AN EXPOSITION OF THE

OFFICIAL CONDUCT OF THOMAS H. BENTON,

One of the Senators from Missouri.

"To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; whose ways are crooked, and *they* froward in their paths."

PROV. I. 12–15.

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TORCH LIGHT.

PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY IN THE MISSOURI REPUBLICAN.

BY CURTIUS.

No. I.

To observers of passing events, it must be apparent, that the opposition organized at Washington last winter, under the auspices of Messrs. Randolph and Calhoun, is more immediately directed against Mr. Clay than Mr. Adams. They would gladly, indeed, destroy the confidence of the people in both, and crush their future hopes, if they could; but if they must fail in either, they would prefer the sacrifice of the Secretary. This is manifest, both from the materials which compose that most extraordinary combination, and the measures they have selected for their attack.

At the accession of Mr. Jefferson to the Presidency, Mr. Randolph was the pet of the nation. No man in the Union, at that time, possessed brighter prospects. Though young, he was considered as one of the leading champions of the democratic party. In the great struggle which then agitated the nation, he performed a conspicuous part, and ac-

quired no little renown for his active and efficient services, especially in the election of Mr. Jefferson; but his career of usefulness was as short lived as it was brilliant. He wished to be *rewarded* (as the opposition phrase it) by the appointment of Minister to England, and was disappointed. His mortified ambition immediately manifested itself in a violent and intemperate hostility to the then administration. Relying on his supposed personal popularity, he hoped to draw in the opposition a great portion of the republican party, and thereby force Mr. Jefferson into a gratification of his ambition. Failing in this, he turned his wrath against the whole party, and it has continued ever since, marked by no other change than increasing virulence. He fell as suddenly as he had risen, and he fell to rise no more. Disappointed himself, he acknowledges no claim, in any other, to that distinction once within his reach, and which he still covets. Claiming to be the first man in the nation, he renounces all political connexion with parties or men, who do not acknowledge, as a fundamental article of their faith, his infallibility, and his right to dictate to, and control them, in all cases whatsoever. Hitherto defeated into every effort to form a party of his own, he has stood to the wall alone, waging a war of political extermination against all men enjoying the confidence of the nation, or rising to political distinction. From the first moment, therefore, that Mr. Clay appeared in public life, and exhibited to the world the powers of his mighty mind, he became the peculiar mark of Mr. Randolph's hostility; he was treated as a usurper of a place belonging exclusively to Mr. Randolph; his political course was assailed as the means at once to destroy him, and restoring his assailant to the confidence of the nation. But, to his utter discomfiture, Mr. Clay was supported by

the whole democratic party, and covered himself with unfading glory, as the author and advocate of those measures which have conducted this nation to her present enviable condition. Foiled in every attack, Mr. Randolph forgot the dignity of the station he held, and attempted, in the Capitol of the nation, to ridicule both Mr. Clay and the people whose confidence he enjoyed, by sneering at his origin and literary attainments; but again the illustrious man who "inherited from his parents nothing but ignorance and poverty," the architect of his own fortune and fame, obtained a signal triumph. He has not been, he never will be forgiven. He that has injured another without provocation, is always the most persevering and unrelenting enemy.

The restless overweening ambition of the Vice-President has manifested itself on many occasions. From the moment he came into Congress, his chief study appears to have been to elevate himself; and his talents, confessedly great, have been exerted accordingly. The highest place in the favor of the Democratic party was occupied by Mr. Clay; and Mr. Calhoun's exalted opinion of himself would not permit him to accept any other. To remove Mr. Clay, or to divide the party by exciting discontents and uniting with the Federalists, was the only means of attaining his object. Mr. Randolph's frequent failures, in attempting the first, admonished him to adopt the latter. Accordingly, in the winter of 1814–15, (while Mr. Clay was absent in Europe,) he made his grand effort. For a while every thing seemed to accommodate itself to his wishes, a few of the Democratic members, disaffected by his means towards the Administration, enlisted under his standard, and the Federalists, then a formidable minority, apparently co-operated. Supposing that he had thus secured a majority in the House of Representatives, he at once assumed

the port and tone of a political leader, high in the confidence of a powerful party ; but, unhappily, the result too soon dissipated all his visionary hopes. On the final vote, the Federalists deserted him in a body, leaving only him and some half dozen of his personal friends to condole with each other over the ruins of his fallen greatness. They had co-operated with him only for the purpose of defeating an important measure of the Administration, and having effected it, they left him prostrate, to determine, at his leisure, who had been the dupe—he or they.

Taught by this experiment, that he had nothing to hope from any attempt to divide the party, his only remaining expedient was to supplant Mr. Clay in the confidence of the People. The failure of Mr. Randolph had taught him that this could not be done by open hostility to Mr. Clay, or his measures. He therefore affected to be the zealous friend of all those measures which had won for Mr. Clay the favor and confidence of the people. While he continued in Congress, he appeared, on all occasions, as their strenuous advocate. Subsequent events have shown that his object was not so much the public good, as his own advancement. He was a member of the caucus of 1816, but whether he advocated Mr. Crawford or Mr. Monroe, in their memorable contest for nomination, is unknown to the writer. He was, however, unquestionably pledged to support for the Presidency the one who should receive a majority in caucus, and, if he was friendly to Crawford, was *bought over*; if hostile, he was rewarded by the appointment of Secretary of War.* In this office he

* These expressions are used only as a practical illustration of the charges made by Mr. Calhoun, and others, against Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay.

is supposed to have earned the Presidency, and especially the support of the Western and South-western states, by his encouragement of internal improvements, and other measures, for which the nation is indebted to Mr. Clay.

That Mr. Calhoun had no share in originating either, is well known, and that his support of them was a hollow pretence, is now ascertained, by the condition on which he has agreed to accept the co-operation of Mr. Randolph.* But the proposition on which Mr. Calhoun most plumed himself was the establishment of a chain of military posts on the Missouri, extending up to the Yellow Stone; and yet, it is well known here, that the whole plan originated with the old Missouri Fur Company, and was suggested by one of the partners, an enterprising trader, now no more.†

The course pursued by Mr. Calhoun had so far succeeded in regaining the good opinion of the people, that his political somerset of 1814 was forgotten by many. It was supposed that he had turned from the error of his ways, and, if encouraged, might yet become a fearless and disinterested statesman. The people of the West, always generously disposed to foster young men of genius, and especially those who, like Mr. Calhoun, profess to have renounced their evil propensities, accorded to him warm-hearted expressions of approbation, intended as incitements to perseverance in well doing. His

*Mr. Randolph publicly announced his determination, in the Senate chamber, to abandon Calhoun, and his faction, if they did not abandon internal improvements, tariff, &c. and Mr. Calhoun subsequently gave the casting vote against the Illinois Canal!!!

†The late Manuel Lisa. The petition was written by a gentleman now residing in St. Charles county, and is presumed to be still on file in the War Department.

abilities were acknowledged, and his industry commended, as promising pledges of *future* greatness and usefulness. This was too much for him. Inflated with his own importance, his vanity pointed out the Presidential chair as now completely within his reach.

The premature zeal of partisans had presented to the nation the question, who should be the successor of Mr. Monroe? Immediately after the commencement of his second term, Mr. Adams and Mr. Crawford were designated as candidates; but neither were supposed to be popular in Pennsylvania, the Western or South-western states. The expressions of kindness (intended as encouragement only) by the people of the West toward Mr. Calhoun, were eagerly converted by him into a pledge of support for any office he might seek, and, to the utter astonishment of the nation, he was declared to be a candidate for the Presidency. A press was established at Washington at an enormous expense. Many thousand papers were sent *gratis* into every part of the Union, full of high-wrought encomiums on the Secretary of War, and calumnies against the Secretary of the Treasury, (Mr. Crawford,) whose popularity in the South, it was thought necessary to destroy. Every art was practised to gain Pennsylvania and the western States, without avail. The western people spontaneously presented to the nation the claims of that distinguished statesman, Mr. Clay, for the same office, and they could not be induced to abandon their earliest and best friend for the gratification of a young aspirant, of equivocal politics and unsettled principles. This expression of preference for Mr. C. immediately brought upon him the vengeful ire of Mr. Calhoun, (hitherto concealed from motives of policy.) Presses were subsidized in every wes-

tern state to traduce Mr. Clay, and the laborers were worthy of the cause.

Some of them were even so indiscreet as to charge it upon Mr. Clay, as a crime, that he voted for the establishment of the U. S. Bank, when it was known to the whole nation that Mr. Calhoun was himself the most zealous advocate of the measure then in Congress. Mr. Calhoun, at length, convinced that he could not obtain the support of a single Western elector, took himself to his old plan of producing division, and succeeded. General Jackson was nominated by Tennessee, and divided the West. Unluckily, Pennsylvania, the strong hold of Mr. Calhoun, immediately forsook him, and, seconding Tennessee, became the most clamorous for the election of the General. Foiled in all his efforts, he began to make preparations for securing his retreat. He first proposed a coalition with Mr. Adams and his friends, and was rejected. After several other experiments, as a last resource, he united with Jackson, and by that means contrived to afflict this nation as Vice-President. This office, however, does not fill the measure of his ambition, or equal his own estimate of his claims. He evidently still labors under the same delusion which first urged him to become a candidate. He still believes, that if Mr. Clay had not been a candidate, he would himself have obtained the votes of the West. *He knows*, that if Mr. Clay had not been nominated, General Jackson would not have been brought foward; and he supposes that he might then have obtained the votes of Pennsylvania, added to South Carolina, the West, and perhaps New Jersey, North Carolina and Maryland. At all events, he would have been one of the three highest; and feared no competition, when intrigue and management would avail. Mr. Clay having been so far in favor with the people

as to be nominated for the Presidency, and his having been the obstacle to Mr. Calhoun's promotion, is an offence not to be forgiven.

Such are the materials of which that motley combination, called the opposition, is composed. Men, disappointed of preferment—some, heretofore professedly the friends of internal improvements, of manufactures, and of a liberal policy in relation to the Spanish American Republics—and those who have heretofore openly assailed them all—have made a common cause against the Administration, the Panama Mission, Roads and Canals, and the protection of Domestic Manufactures.

But it may be said, that one, at least, of the most active and zealous members of the opposition, Col. Benton, is the friend of Mr. Clay. Let us examine how that matter stands: That he claims to be the relation, and was once the friend of Mr. Clay, is conceded. In 1822, it is understood, he attended at St. Charles, while the legislature was in session, and urged his nomination to the Presidency. From that period, until 1824, nothing further was heard from Col. Benton concerning the Presidential election, he being, during that time, at his residence in Virginia. In the latter year, he made to his constituents the celebrated "visit of inclination and duty," and during the summer and fall he displayed some zeal, both in electioneering for Mr. Clay against Gen. Jackson, and in reviling Mr. Barton, his colleague, who was then a candidate for re-election to the Senate. A deadly hostility is known to have existed between Gen. Jackson and Col. Benton. They were literally at daggers' points, and both were supposed to be implacable. Gen. Jackson and Mr. Clay were, to say the least, not friendly, ever since the latter, impelled by a sense of duty, spoke of the conduct of the former, in the Seminole war, as

he thought it deserved. A reconciliation, as sudden as it was unexpected, has been effected between Col. Benton and the General, and which yet remains a mystery to those who are familiar with the character and disposition of both gentlemen.

The Presidential election terminated in a plurality of votes in favor of Gen. Jackson. The contest was evidently between him and Mr. Adams, in the House of Representatives; and the partisans of the former shouted in anticipation of the triumph of their favorite. His adherents at Washington affected to entertain no doubt of his success. It was a time, indeed, to try the souls of men looking forward to Executive favor: it required a steady hand to adjust the balance of probabilities. Barton had long been in favor of Adams, and Col. Benton soon declared for Jackson. Then came the tug of war —the vote of our Representatives being the subject of contest. It was given to Mr. Adams; and a friendship of nine years standing, between Col. Benton and Mr. Scott, was dissolved. Mr. Clay was soon after nominated to the office of Secretary of State. Col. Benton, indeed, voted for the ratification of his nomination; but the opposition was not then organized, nor was Randolph, its present supreme director, then in the Senate.

In the spring of 1825, Col. Benton revisited Missouri. The Calhoun and Jackson presses were then teeming with abuse of Mr. Clay; he was openly charged with corruption in obtaining his appointment, and with having purchased and sold the votes of the western States. These libels were republished here with additions; and the relation and friend of Mr. Clay observed, throughout his visit, a mysterious silence. He who, one year before, had been eloquent in his praise, would silently have suffered obloquy to settle on his name. "It is al-

most as criminal to hear a worthy man traduced, without attempting justification, as to be the author of the calumny against him." If Col. Benton had been the "friend indeed" of Mr. Clay, he would not have heard him vilely abused without warm and just indignation—much less would he have consorted with those who are full of "envy, malice, and all uncharitableness," towards that distinguished citizen. Fortunately, Mr. Clay had a surer reliance in the confidence and affection of the people of Missouri than the kindred and friendship of her Senator. Col. Benton returned to Washington, and became the personal friend and close ally of Messrs. Randolph and Calhoun. His first public act is opposition to the favorite policy of Mr. Clay, and of the people of the West. His next, an accusation against Mr. Clay, of having palmed upon the Senate a false translation of an important public document.* Mr. Clay is the advocate of internal improvement, and Col. Benton voted against the bill for repairing the great Western avenue, the Cumberland road; that highway upon which he once declared he had wrought since its commencement, and would continue to work until it reached the western confines of this State, or, perhaps, the mouth of Columbia. Mr. Clay is friendly to the protection of domestic manufactures; and Col. Benton has announced his intention of voting for a reduction of the tariff, now but a short time in operation, and passed by the aid of his vote.† It cannot be disguised that Col. Benton participates in the feelings of his new friends, Calhoun and Randolph, and seconds all their plans. Mr. Randolph boasts of him as his "*friend indeed.*" On a recent occasion, he was entrusted with his s -

*See the preface to his speech on the Panama Mission.

†See his speech on the bill to graduate the price of public lands, p. 46.

cret intentions, and yet permitted Mr. Clay to be placed in a disadvantageous situation, without an effort.* Mr. Randolph sailed for Europe, leaving his speeches to be published under his care. In short, Mr. Randolph's will is law to the whole opposition; he has said they should vote against internal improvements, &c. and it was done.

Although this opposition originated in hostility to particular men, yet, as they have selected important measures against which they unite, it is now no longer a question between Mr. Adams or Mr. Clay, and any body else—but a question of principle—shall our policy in relation to South America, our manufactures, and our system of internal improvements, be abandoned or maintained? Shall the Cumberland Road be suffered to go to ruin, or repaired and extended? In some future number I shall discuss these questions. In my next, I shall attempt to show, that the leaders of the opposition are obnoxious, according to their own principles, to the charge of corruption, which they now make against the President and Secretary of State.

CURTIUS.

*See the account of the late duel.

No. II.

There seems to be a prevailing disposition in the human family to impute all their failures to any other cause rather than to their own deficiences. Hence, we find a general propensity to attribute unfairness to successful competitors. Each candidate considers his own claims as paramount to all others, and his defeat as a misfortune, if not an injury. The disappointed are united by what they deem their common calamity, and, while they disagree in every thing else, combine in a common cause against their more fortunate competitor. If they cannot wholly deprive him of the prize he has won, they will, at least, disturb him in its enjoyment. This disposition shows itself in the pastimes of boyhood, in the graver pursuits of riper years, and no where more conspicuously than in contests for political preferment. Most of us have witnessed, and many of us, in our youth, have joined, the profitless contest of boys for a seat behind a passing carriage. We have seen the little urchins putting forth all their energies, each endeavoring to outstrip all the rest in the race; but, no sooner is the contest determined, and the victor in possession of his prize, that all the rest make a common effort to deprive him of the reward of his toils, by uniting in the well-known cry of "cut behind!" The same spirit, increased to a bitterness that curdles the "milk of human kindness," too often marks the progress and result of political contests—of which the late Presidential election furnishes a lamentable instance. Men of disappointed ambition, full of resentment for defeated hopes, and an unholy desire of revenge, have combined

with the unrelenting personal enemies of their successful rivals, and openly accuse some of the purest patriots and brightest ornaments of the nation with "corruption."

The Charge originated with Mr. Calhoun, who directed his hopeful *protege*, McDuffie, to make a public assualt, or cause it to be done. The latter, having then a lively recollection of the fleeting character of his own valor, knew that it would not be relied on, if, peradventure, he should have occasion for it, in maintaining the attitude it would become necessary to assume, wisely bethought him of the expedient of the monkey, who covetted certain chesnuts, which had been placed in the fire to be roasted, and not wishing to burn his own fingers, cunningly made use of the paw of a cat that lay dozing on the hearth. Accordingly, Mr. McDuffie placed in the hands of the miserable George Kremer, for publication, a charge of corruption against Mr. Clay: This Kremer, was perhaps the only creature then in Congress that had not wit enough to keep out of the fire. He was, therefore, easily persuaded to thurst his person between that of his instigator and danger, and thus far, he proves to be a better defence than "lutestring." The charge was published, Mr. Clay publicly denied it, and denounced the author; Kremer avowed himself as such, but, unluckily, no body believed him—the tolerable decent English in which the accusation was made, was considered a sufficient refutation of his claims, and the public, by common consent, designated the real authors. Mr. Clay being then Speaker of the House of Representatives, promptly demanded an investigation. Kremer not having received any instructions for the government of his conduct, in this unforeseen situation, and relying

upon the resources of his principals, declared that he would make the charges good; and a committee of investigation was elected by common consent—the facts on which the accusers relied were alleged to have transpired at Washington, and then of recent occurrence. The witnesses, if any existed, might have been produced before the committee, at any moment. The charges, if true, might have been established then, if ever; and a full investigation was expected by the nation. Kremer promised, from time to time, to develope the particulars of the alleged corruption, and to maintain them by testimony. At length, however, he filed a formal plea to the jurisdiction of the committee, and refused to proceed. No doubt was entertained at that time, nor is there yet, that Calhoun and McDuffie were the managers of the whole, and directed Kremer in every thing but his pledge to support of his charges; and this being out of their power, it was never their intention to attempt. All impartial men at once acquitted Mr. Clay, and treated the charge and the fabricators as unworthy serious consideration. Even poor Kremer discovered that his new friends had taken advantage of his headlong zeal for General Jackson, to impose on his unsuspecting stupidity, and make him the dupe of their designs. He declared that he did not believe one word of the charges which he had become instrumental in presenting to the nation.

Nothing more was heard from or *openly* attempted by Mr. Calhoun and his party, in relation to the accusations against Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams, (for both are included,) until after the union with Randolph, Van Buren, Benton, and others, in that motley combination, which, for want of some political principle to give it a name, is denominated the

"Opposition." The charge has now been renewed, and is reiterated by every member of the coalition, each ambitious of employing the greatest variety of the most opprobious epithets; each vying with the other "who shall sink his stone deepest into the head" of that political Goliah, the Administration. The facts upon which the Opposition rely in support of their charge of corruption, are, that Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams were not friendly previous to the election; that Mr. Clay voted for Mr. Adams, who afterwards appointed him Secretary of State—and upon these facts, this nation is called upon to convict two of her most distinguished citizens of corruption.

They would have us believe their principles to be, that no two distinguished men, who have ever differed, can become reconciled, without a corrupt motive; that when a President appoints to office a person who voted for him, it must be understood to be a *reward* for his vote; and if he appoints a person who voted against him, it is the price of apostacy, and in both cases, corruption in each party. I shall waive, for the present, the consideration of the fact, that Mr. Clay and Mr. Jackson were irreconcileably hostile to each other; that the former could never have voted for the latter without abandoning the principles which he had fearlessly avowed and maintained, in the face of the nation. Suffice it to say, that he would have rendered himself at least as obnoxious to the charge of corruption, if he had voted for Mr. Jackson, as he did in voting for Mr. Adams. My present object is to bring the leading members of the Opposition to the test of their own standard, and examine them by the principles they have assumed, and shall require only the aid of an additional proposition, which will, doubtless, be conceded, namely—that

he who offers, or is willing to be corrupted, is just as unfit to be trusted, as if he had actually received the reward of corruption.

If then no two distinguished men, having once differed, can become reconciled without corrupt motive, I may ask upon what principles have Messrs. Calhoun and Randolph become reconciled to each other? These gentlemen, before the late election, were thorough-going personal and political enemies. No two men in the nation exhibited more rancorous hostility toward each other: they have become restored to each other's favor, without any other apparent cause than the election of Mr. Adams to the Presidency, and the appointment of Mr. Clay, whom they both hate, if possible, still more than they hated each other. By what magic power has the Vice President secured to himself the personal friendship and support of Van Buren and others, who heretofore pretended to be the warm friends of William H. Crawford? All of us remember the foul calumnies which Mr. Calhoun and his adherents fabricated and published against this excellent man and upright statesman, whom, by way of repoach, they called "the Radical Chief." Nor have we forgotten the accusations made against his friends in Congress, among whom Mr. Van Buren and others, now of the Opposition, were represented to the nation as base conspirators against the most estimable rights and dearest interests of the people. Yet these men, thus reviled and denounced, have not only forgiven their own injuries, but have enlisted under the banner of their accuser, and made him with a common cause in attempting to destroy the reputation of others. To what cause shall we attribute the sudden attachment of Col. Benton for Gen. Jackson, to whom he had been personally hostile for years? Between these gentlemen the

war had been carried on with a degree of determined hostility on both sides, that forbid even the hope of reconciliation. Both implacable in their resentments, their feud was deadly. The friends of each arrayed themselves against those of the other, with the steadfast implacability of hostile clans, and nothing, it is believed, prevented the loss of lives, but the removal of one of the chiefs, (Col. B.) from Tennessee. Hostilities, however, did not altogether cease between the chiefs, with their opportunities of meeting. On the part of Col. Benton, at least, there was no abatement. He never wavered, throughout the investigation and public discussion of the conduct of the General in the Seminole war, and continued to denounce him for that conduct, among other things, until after the electors were chosen, and the result of the Presidential election, so far as it depended on them, was known—when suddenly the hostile chiefs became reconciled, their wounds healed, and their mutual injuries forgotten, or at least forgiven.

The Presidential election, so far as it depended on this State, was contested only between Mr. Clay and Gen. Jackson; and Col. Beuton devoted his time and talents to the support of the former, manifesting, on all occasions, his preference for Mr. Clay, and his objections to Gen. Jackson, in language and conduct by no means equivocal. He prepared an address to the people of this state, in which Mr. Clay was represented as qualified, above all others, for the Presidency, by his eminent talents, his undoubted patriotism, and incorruptible integrity. To this address he put his own sign manual, and by his indefatigable industry procured the signatures of many of the *citizens* of this state—by his procurement it was published, and distributed in all

parts of the state. His personal exertions were devoted to the same cause. He was heard in all parts of the state, lauding Mr. Clay, and denouncing Gen. Jackson—the first as pre-eminently qualified, the latter as wholly unfit for the office he sought. The election of the former was urged as necessary to the prosperity of the people, while the elevation of the latter was deprecated, as dangerous to their liberties. Even after the election in this state, and before the general result was known, Col. Benton exhibited his anxiety to acquit himself of all the blame, and "clear his skirts" of the blood which was to deluge the land, if Gen. Jackson should be President, and at the same time, to put in his claim to a share of the honors, if he was defeated, by boasting of the exertions which he had made against that "dangerous man," declaring that he had rode eight hundred miles for the purpose of preventing his success in Missouri.* But, in a few short months, his opinions of Gen. Jackson's qualifications and claims to the Presidency underwent a total revolution; and an attempt was even made to dispose of the vote of this State in his favor.

Whatever difficulty we might have in ascertaining the motives, which led to this extraordinary event, by the ordinary means of judging of human actions, there can be none if we apply the principles and mode of reasoning adopted by the Opposition. Colonel Benton was supposed to have the control of the vote of Missouri; instead, therefore, of making overtures to Mr. Scott, it was thought most expedient to gain the favor of Col. Benton. The latter, proud of position which he supposed

*One of the Ohio papers compliments Col. Benton for having made this declaration, while on his way to Washington in Nov. 1824, being a few weeks, only, before he directed Mr. Scott to vote for Gen. Jackson!!!

himself to occupy, naturally enough concluded, that the election of President was in his own hands, and having no very flattering hope of preferment from Mr. Adams, who might not so easily be persuaded of his qualifications as Gen. Jackson, and influenced, perhaps, by other considerations, which have not been developed, he declared for the General; and the vote of Missouri was considered as disposed of accordingly—but Mr. Scott either took offence at not being consulted personally, or was opposed in principle, to this disposition of his vote; and the nine years training of his friend proved unavailing; at the very moment his exertions were most important, he took the bit in his teeth, and bolted.

Upon the principles laid down by the Opposition, I have already shown, that Mr. Randolph *offered to be corrupted*, by seeking a mission to England, as a reward for his services in the election of Mr. Jefferson; that Mr. Calhoun was *corrupted*, by the appointment of Secretary of War. To these instances of the *purity* of the principles of the Opposition, I may add, that Mr. Van Buren was *more* than willing to have accepted the appointment lately conferred on Mr. Gallatin, and it is well known that Col. Benton has been soliciting a foreign mission ever since he has been in Congress, and those who know him cannot be persuaded that he would have refused such an appointment even from the present Administration; indeed, it has been insinuated, that all his wrath would have been spared, if Mr. Adams had not unluckily overlooked, or forgotten, his claims, and inserted the name of John Sergeant instead of his, in the nomination of the mission to Panama.—In short, it is easy to perceive, that, if the Administration were as corrupt as it is represent-

ed, they might purchase the silence, and even the support, of the most clamorous of the Opposition. We are, therefore, forced to conclude, that the alleged corruption does not exist, or that the Opposition is not worth the purchase.

In making the application of their own principles to themselves, I wish, by no means, to be understood, that I believe the members of the Opposition as corrupt, or corruptible, as their own mode of reasoning, from particular facts, would prove them to lbe. I believe many of them worthy the high stations they occupy. They, however, cannot complain, if the impure motives which they have imputed to the members of the Administration, by inference from particular facts, should be fixed on themselves, by a like inference from simliar facts. We have no means of penetrating the bosoms of men, and developing the motives of human action. Man, in the general, erects in his own mind a standard by which he judges the motives of others, and assigns to his fellow-man the motives for particular acts, which he supposes could alone influence him to do the same thing, in a similar situation. The Opposition, we presume, have only the odinary means ascertaining motives, by outward actions; hence, when we find them arguing the existence of corruption from the existence of particular acts, they cannot expect to escape imputation, when they are found doing the same things. But my object was only to bring the gentlemen to the test of their own principles and mode of reasoning, and there I will leave them for the present.

CURTIUS.

No. III.

When political men, who have been remarkable for their reciprocal hatred of each other, surrender their judgements to the influence of malevolence, envy and ill nature, (the offspring of defeated hope,) abandon their former principles, their political and private friends, and unite in a common cause against them all, the public have a right to demand, and certainly expect, an explanation. When such men indulge in denunciations of the distinguished men who have been universally esteemed as an honor to the nation, and acuse them of the highest crimes which public servants can commit, the people before whom they are arraigned owe it to themselves as well as to the accused, to demand some evidence of the truth of the accusations. But it would seem, that the men who have ventured to abuse the public ear, by imputing corruption to the President and Secretary of State, shrink from the duty which devolves on them, as accusers, and shun the investigation which has been assiduously sought by the accused, and their friends; yet they continue to brave the well merited indignation of the public, by reiterating their charges, on the unsupported and very questionable authority of their own assertions.

Under these circumstances, it would be sufficient to oppose the well-earned reputation of the President and Secretary, for sterling patriotism and inflexible integrity, to the assertions of men whose practices have been continually in opposition to their principles, of which they have hollow professions, and who have so involved themselves in all the mazes of contradiction as to have forfeited every claim to public confidence, and lost every hope

of regaining it without destroying the political reputation of those who have been steadfast in their principles, and consistent in their politics. The unsupported allegations of ambitious men whose sole object is their own aggrandizement, and whose only hope of attaining that end depends on an abandonment, by the people, of those measures which have advanced this nation to her present prosperity, and the destruction of their author and advocate, who has maintained them with a fearless independence that challenges the admiration even of his enemies—deserves the reprobation, rather than the support of the people. Waiving, however, all advantages which this view of the subject would give the accused, the inquiry may safely be prosecuted, to the utter discomfiture and disgrace of the accusers, upon their own testimoney. If their opinions of their idol, expressed in by-gone days, are entitled to any weight, a vote for Mr. Adams, in preference to Gen. Jackson, will be found to be so far from furnishing the slightest presumption of impurity of motive, that it could not have been given otherwise, without a total abandonment of every principle upon which the preservation of the Union, and the well being of the republic, depend.

When the conduct of Gen. Jackson, in the Seminole War, was under investigation in Congres, Randolph and Cobb, two of his new converted adherents, upon their *oaths* as members of the House of Representatives, openly accused him of a total disregard of the constitution and laws, and a tyrannical abuse of power. Upon the united testimony of these gentlemen, and other members of Congress, supported by Col. Benton, with his Enquirer, the Richmond Enquirer, and Noah's National Advocate—all now of the Opposition, and

the most violent of the enemies of the President and Secretary of State—it was alleged that Gen. Jackson had kept an army on foot, and peremptorily refused to disband it, in open defiance of the orders of the President of the United States, as commander-in-chief, in direct violation of his oath, and his duty as a subordinate officer; that while commanding at New-Orleans, he violated the liberty of the press, denouncing and threatening to visit the heaviest military punishment upon the editor of a newspaper, for publishing, after the treaty of peace was signed, and the enemy had abandoned his attempt on New-Orleans, an article extracted from another paper, intimating the prospect of a speedy peace; that he actually imprisoned the author of an article commenting on this extraordinary procedure, and not only refused obedience to a writ of habeas corpus, issued, according to the constitution and laws of land, to inquire into the cause of imprisonment, but, in the spirit of military despotism, directed his vengeance, supported by an armed force, against the judge who issued the writ; that he prevented the legislature of Louisiana from freely exercising their constitutional functions, by the employment of military force; that while in the State of Georgia, in command of a part of the national troops, he assumed authority to command the whole body of the militia of that State, in exclusion of the Governor, their constitutional commander-in-chief, to whom he offered the grossest insults: that, after he had himself declared the Seminole War at an end, under pretence of pursuing a few stragglers, he invaded the territories of Spain, a neutral nation, invested and ultimately captured her fortresses, and made the troops of the garrisons prisoners of war; that he arrested two individuals, subjects of a neutral power, whom he accused of

having committed the same offence against the nation, which De Kalb, Lafayette and others, committed against Great Britain, that of aiding her enemy in war; that he arraigned them before a military court, upon charges unknown to martial law, and by his influence procured their conviction, upon testimony wholly illegal; that after they were sentenced by the court the one to suffer death, the other to be publicly whipped, he reversed the sentence of the latter, and caused the one to be hanged, the other to be shot to death, declaring them to be "outlaws and pirates;" and that he put to death some of his Indian prisoners of war, without even the formality of a trial.

Such are the accusations, among others, made against Gen. Jackson, seven years ago, by his *new* friends. If true, he not only deserved all the epithets which they then copiously bestowed upon him, but the punishment which they meditated. That he escaped the latter, is, perhaps, to be attributed to the clemency of some, and the fears of other members of Congress, who had become alarmed for the safety of their ears.*

Whether the charges were true or false, however, it is not my purpose now to inquire. It is sufficient that they were believed, and supported by a great portion of those who now compose the Opposition to the Administration, and by the ablest men and most distinguished statesmen then in Congress—among whom, were the late Mr. Lowndes, of South Carolina, and Mr. Clay. The opinion of the lat-

*The General and suite were at Washington during the debate, and members of Congress were threatened with the loss of their ears, for daring to maintain the truth of the accusations. A messenger was even despatched to Richmond, Va. "to drag out," as the phrase is, the author of certain essays in the Enquirer.

ter, it seems, has continued unchanged—and "this is the very head and front of his offending." If he had chopped round, as did the political weathercocks who are now the most intolerant of Gen. Jackson's adherents, he would doubtless have been taken into favor as they have been, and would have continued, in their estimation, a wise, incorruptible, independent, and fearless statesman, of *fixed* principles and *consistent* practice.

The History of Gen. Jackson's Life, published by his consent, furnishes no evidence of his qualification for the office of Chief Magistrate, nor, indeed, for any civil office—the whole book, with the exception of a few lines, being occupied in detailing and eulogizing his military exploits; nor has tradition preserved any account of him as a private citizen, or civil officer, from which any opinion favorable to his pretensions can be drawn. On the contrary, we have recently had conclusive demonstration of his entire ignorance, or total disregard, of the constitution and laws of the land, and the nature of our civil institutions, and a manifestation of the arbitrary and despotic disposition which he is disposed to indulge, whenever he has the physical power. In a letter to the late President, he declares that if he had commanded in the military district within which the Hartford Convention sat, he would have brought the members before a Court Martial and executed them, under the second section of the articles of war!!! which provides, "*That in time of war, all persons* NOT *citizens of, or owing allegiance to, the United States, who shall be found lurking as spies, in or about the fortifications or encampments of the armies of the United States, or any of them, shall suffer death, according to the law and usage of nations, by sentence of a General Court Martial.*" Now, the

members of the "Hartford Convention" were all "citizens of, and owing allegiance to, the United States"—they sat in conclave, and were charged with, and, perhaps, were guilty of, meditating treason against the United States; an offence defined by the constitution, and punishable only upon indictment of a grand jury, and conviction by a petit jury, on the testimony of two witnesses, after a full and fair trial, in a court of law. They were certainly not *aliens* "lurking as *spies* in or about fortifications or encampments," and, with all due deference to Gen. Jackson and his abettors, under our system of laws, the act which he said he would have committed, would have been an offence of no less grade than murder. It seems he has yet to learn, that, under our form of government, even a traitor is not to be punished at the discretion of a military commander.

One of the reasons stated by Mr. Clay for not voting in favor of Gen. Jackson, was, that he considered him a "military chieftain," which seems to have given particular offence to his partisans. Yet they cannot diguise that his claims to the Presidency are maintained exclusively upon his military services. They ask, whether those services are to disqualify him? And I answer, certainly not—but his military talents and services *alone* are not sufficient to qualify him for the chief magistracy of this republic. He is no more a second Washington, as his friends pretend, because like him he has been a victorious general, than he is a second Jefferson, because his name begins with J. Luckily, however, Mr. Clay will find a precedent, in the objections volunteered by General Jackson against a "military chieftain" of the Revolution, the late Isaac Shelby, of Kentucky, when the President was about to confer on him the appointment of Sec-

retary of War. By the same authority, (Gen. Jackson,) the objection made to Mr. Adams, that he was once a Federalist, vanishes; we have it under his sign manual, as the volunteer adviser of the late President, that party distinctions are all a farce.*

The very men who now denounce Mr. Clay for not having changed his opinion of Gen. Jackson's principles and pretensions, professed to entertain the same opinions, expressed in 1819, confirmed by the subsequent acts and avowals of Gen. Jackson; nor was the smallest indication given of a change until it was ascertained that the election would devolve on the House of Representatives, and the prospect of the General's success brightened; when suddenly, the settled opinions of years were abandoned, and the man who they had, upon the most deliberate investigation, pronounced to be a military tyrant, regardless of *all law*, as if by a miracle, became pre-eminently qualified for the office of Chief Magistrate in a government of *laws*. Some of the gentlemen whose judgements were thus wonderfully illuminated, pretend that they were sincere in their former opinions, but that on becoming personally acquainted with Gen. Jackson, they became satisfied of their error; but the most of them cannot claim the benefit of this pretext, miserable as it is—among these is Col. Benton. He, at least, cannot pretend previous ignorance of the character and disposition of Gen. Jackson, or that he has been led into denunciations of him by *mistake*. There are circumstances fresh in the recollection of many of the people of this State, (if he has forgotten

*The letters here alluded to were published in the winter of 1823—4, in consequence of some misunderstanding between Mr. Lowrie and Mr. Monroe.

them,) exhibited in the publications made by these gentlemen against each other, which should have forbidden reconciliation forever.* Yet these friends have become warm friends and close allies. Col. Benton, at least, is now as thoroughgoing in support of his *new* friend, as he was lately violent against him. As if fearful he would fall short of Gen. Jackson's demands, he has renounced his friendship for Mr. Clay, and now accuses him of practising a fraud upon the Senate, by purposely furnishing them a false translation of a public document. He has deserted his *kinsman*, whose obedient servant he lately was, and confederates with his enemies in destroying his well-earned reputation, for no other apparent reason than that he would not follow the example of changing long established opinions, and become a parasite and flatterer of the Opposition favorite.

With such facts before us, it would seem to me to be wholly unnecessary to urge the danger of enlisting in the cause, encouraging the ill-directed ambition, and following the fortunes of men of such deplorable instability in their friendships, their opinions, and their principles. Surely no confidence can be placed in the allegations of politicians who, at one time, upon their oaths, accuse a public officer of high crimes, and at another, without atonement, or even explanation, turn and worship him as an idol. From the specimens we have had of the fluctuating opinions of the vindictive accusers of the President and Secretary, we have reason to anticipate, that ere long they will renounce

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*One of the publications of Gen. Jackson, during the memorable controversy with Col. B. is said to be still extant, in the possession of a gentleman of New Madrid county, in this state, and contains an allegation of facts, as well as of opinions, not very creditable to his new friend

their pretended opinions, abandon their groundless accusations, and, as likely as not, become the supporters of the men they now hate. They are not, even now, consistent with themselves: while they profess to reverence the constitution, they countenance and support the ambitious projects of a man, who, according to their own opinions, has repeatedly shown his contempt or ignorance of its provisions. Claiming to be the special champions of state rights, they propose to reward, with the highest honors of the Republic, the man who, as commander of a part of the national army, prevented the legislature of one State from freely exercising its constitutional functions, and daringly insulted the Chief Magistrate of another sovereign State, and usurped a portion of his constitutional powers.

Professing to be the exclusive friends of the people, and the special guardians of their liberties, they endeavor to advance to the Chief Magistracy of this nation, one who stands accused by themselves of "obstructing the administration of justice"—"affecting to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power"—of "suspending the writ of Habeas Corpus"—of denying the "benefits of trial by jury" to persons arrested for "pretended offences," and subjecting them to a "mock trial," by a military court, and of many other acts of oppression, similar in character, and equally grievous with those alleged against the late king of England, in our Declaration of Independence. Indeed, the Opposition seem to have but one rule of political action, and that forms the very definition of despotism, namely, that "the end justifies the means." Even that sacred instrument, which stands as a proud monument of the wisdom and firmness of its authors, advocates and suppor-

ors, consecrated by the blood of patriots, revered by the friends of civil liberty of every nation, has not escaped the unhallowed assaults of the disaffected: before the assembled Senate of the nation, the *Declaration of Independence* has been pronounced by the mouth of their supreme director, Mr. Randolph, to be a "RIDICULOUS FANFARONADE," that is, *a tumour of fictitious dignity*. It is true, that Mr. R. is the only member of the coalition who has had the hardihood or indiscretion openly to avow their true principles; but it is equally certain that at the coming forth, of the above *classical* epithet, he was supported by the approving smiles of all his confederates in the Senate, and especially of his "*friend indeed*,"* who, it is said, always contrives to be near the "Senator from Virginia," when he makes his "senate-distressing-harangues," and with "an aspect of wondrous wisdom," a greedy ear, and delighted countenance, devours the "farragos" of the "wonderful man."

CURTIUS.

* Col. Benton. The intimacy of this gentleman with Mr. Randolph, is not the least extraordinary of the events growing out of the late election. To us, at a distance, it appears altogether mysterious. Those, however, who claim to understand the matter, insinuate that it was produced by their respective wants—the one wanted adulation, and receives it—the other wanted a legacy, and expects it. Let him beware—"the most extravagant love is nearest to the strongest hatred." He has himself recently verified the truth of this remark, and its converse.

No. IV.

History teaches us, that the leaders of parties and factions, in all governments, in the general, commence their career of ambition by professing an ardent love for the people, and a devotion to civil liberty. They stimulate the prejudices, and assiduously court the favor of the people, with a view to their own aggrandizement; and, if successful, almost invariably become unrelenting oppressors. In a word, they commence demagogues, and end tyrants. In our own times this truth has been exemplified by Napoleon, in Europe, and in the brilliant, but short-lived career of Iturbide, on this continent. Both were "military chieftains" of great renown. Professing to be the devoted friends of the People, the champions of civil liberty, and the defenders of the rights of man, they succeeded in deluding their too confiding countrymen, until they reached the goal of their ambition—power, when, for the first time, they unmasked, and a betrayed people beheld their treacherous leaders crowned Emperors, and armed with the sceptre of absolute authority, supported by the forces which a mistaken confidence had confided to their control. These examples, with others familiar to those who are at all conversant with history, ancient or modern, ought, and it is hoped will, prove instructive, as they are solemn warnings to the people of this republic. A new faction (a party, if they please) has been organized for the avowed purpose of investing a mere "military chieftain" with the Chief Executive authority of the nation; one whose lust of arbitrary power has betrayed itself in every public act of his life—a man who has treated the constitution as an "old parchment," unworthy his

perusal and beneath his respect. Yet, to subserve his ambition, he and his adherents profess an affection for the people, and a reverence for the constitution, equally wonderful and sudden. He assumes the captivating appellation of the "people's candidate"—they, with equal propriety, call themselves "people's men," and "friends of State rights." Fortunately, their headlong impetuosity so far outstrips their discretion, as to expose their designs too palpably to escape the observation of those who are not blinded by their zeal, or hoodwinked by interest. Their impatience under disappointment, their desire of preferment, and recklessness of the means, admonish us how little their actions are governed by love of the people, or respect for the constitution.

No sooner was the late Presidential election determined, than General Jackson resigned his seat in the Senate, (as he had before resigned every civil office conferred on him,) without having made a solitary exhibition of the talents which had been imputed to him by his adherents, and hitherto unfortunately concealed from the rest of the world. As he accepted a seat in the Senate pending the election for President, and resigned as soon as the contest was over, we have a right to infer that it was accepted, not with a view to the public good, but from the influence which was hoped from his personal presence at Washington, and was accordingly resigned as soon as it was known that he could not overawe the Representatives of the people. Surely if his friends really believed him possessed of the abilities to entitle him to the office of Chief Executive Magistrate, they owed it to him, to themselves, and to the nation, to have used their exertions to have retained his services in a station eminently calculated at once to promote the com-

mon weal, and to manifest his pretensions to public confidence. Or, will they admit the humiliating fact, that his retirement from an office to which he was by no means equal, was dictated by prudence, or was suggested by the mortified ambition of a capricious man, goaded by disappointment.

If Gen. Jackson really believes in the imputed corruption of the present Administration, as he and his adherents pretend, it was neither the part of a statesman and patriot, to abandon the important station which he declared was not to be sought or declined by any man; nor was it consistent with his professed love of the people, to desert the post which had been assigned him, to guard them against all unconstitutional encroachments of power. No—it cannot be disguised, that the man who was sufficiently honored in being nominated for the Presidency by a single state, has resigned an office much above his just expectations, to avenge in some sort the affront which his overweening ambition has received in not being placed at the head of the nation. He will be President or nothing. In the very act of resigning his seat in the Senate, he announces, that he does not *decline*, but continues to *seek* the office of President; and, by way of appealing from the intelligence to the generosity of the nation, makes profession of ardent love for the people, and recommends them to alter their constitution, under the provisions of which his ambition has been baffled. He states as a reason for his retirement, that his proposed alteration (by previous arrangement, no doubt) would be brought before the Senate, and delicacy forbid his taking part in their deliberations on the subject; which is nothing short of an admission, that his only hope of success depends on the alteration of the constitution, and that he is, therefore, directly interested in the question.

The proposition which comes thus recommended by the authority and necessities of Gen. Jackson, is —1st. To discontinue the use of electors, the eventual vote by states, and the umpirage of the House of Representatives. 2d. To adopt an uniform mode of electing by districts, and to commit the election to the direct vote of the people. The first branch of the proposition evidently designs "to give the election, unconditionally and absolutely, to the powerful states," and was justly denounced by Col. Benton in his speech of 1824,* "because it goes to the subversion of the government under which we live," and "would unsettle one of the compromises on which the constitution reposes," The second contemplates to deprive the states, as such, of the power of appointing electors, and of uniting or dividing their electoral colleges, according to their sovereign will. Both branches, indeed, propose to circumscribe the power of the states in the Presidential election, and, taken together, would destroy their very existence, so far as the Executive Department of the national government is concerned. There is, therefore, every thing in the proposition to render it hateful to the real "friends of state rights." Yet no sooner did Gen. Jackson announce, that the adoption of this principle-subverting, state-consolidating amendment, might possibly aid his promotion, than a committee of the Senate, with Col. Benton at their head, all the *soi-disant* "friends of state rights" rallied to his support.

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*Part of this speech was published in the Missouri Republican, of the 13th July last, and as I shall frequently quote from it in this number, I refer the reader to that paper, or to the entire speech, in pamphlet form, published and distributed by the author in 1824. I consider it a triumphant vindication of the rights of the states, which neither he, nor any of the band, can sufficiently refute.

Indeed the talent of enforcing discipline among, and implicit obedience from, his followers, which distinguishes Gen. Jackson, has in no instance been more conspicnously displayed than in this: at his command, the whole of his adherents (including the awkward squad under McDuffie and Kremer,) wheeled about, with the promptitude and precision of veteran troops, and countermarched the whole line of their political course, treading under foot the principles they professed, and destroying all the political land-marks hitherto held sacred.

Some of the sincere friends of state rights have entertained fears that the states, as sovereigns, have conceded too much, in the Federal Constitution, to the representative principle, which they honestly fear will tend to consolidation. Their struggle has, therefore, constantly been, to prevent the apprehended evil, by preserving to the states, unimpaired and inviolate, all the powers reserved to them. They have uniformly exerted themselves to prevent the accumulation of power in the General Government, or the diminution in that of the states, either by construction or additional express provisions in the constitution—certainly none have hitherto desired a change by which the power of the states should be impaired. This consolidating project owes it its origin, exclusively, to the miscalled "people's men." They would deprive the states of the power of appointing electors to vote in the first instance, and to destroy their present equality, as sovereign states, on a second trial—so that the small states "may stand for nothing," and "the election of President be given, absolutely and unconditionally, to the powerful states." Yet, they are bold enough to call themselves exclusively the friends of state rights.

To render the proposed innovation more acceptable, and at the same time to support the pretence to the appellation of "people's men," claimed by the authors, it is proposed to discontinue the use of electors, and commit the election to the direct vote of the people. This, it will be seen, possesses little or no substance, and certainly is too weak to carry its companions. The election is now virtually in the people; they choose electors, who are previously pledged to vote for a particular candidate, and never fail to redeem their pledges; they are but the organs through which the expressed voice of the people is conveyed to the seat of Government. All the benefits, therefore, proposed by the alteration, are now substantially enjoyed; a mere difference in form will certainly not authorize an intermeddling with the constitution. There is also a difficulty growing out of the plan proposed, in case of no choice on the first trial. Col. Benton (or rather Gen. Jackson) proposes to refer the election back to the people, limiting their choice, however, to the two highest of those voted for; but, waiving all other objections, (and there are many to which this expedient is obnoxious,) it "stands condemned" as another attempt to abridge the freedom of choice, by requiring voters to give their suffrages, not for the man in their opinion most worthy and best qualified, but for one of two having the highest number of votes—to use the language of Col. Benton, against a similar proposition, in 1824. "the range of selection was narrowed one half by the amendment of 1803, and now it is proposed to take away the right altogether."

Col. Benton in his speech of 1824, already referred to, says, "there are positive advantages in referring the election to the House of Representatives; it is a safer depository of the elective privi-

lege than any other body of equal numbers, which exists at this time, or can be created under the constitution." "If it is said, that there may be some bad materials in the House, I will ask for the body of equal numbers in which there is so little? And I will maintain that the House of Representatives has ever been, now is, and while the Republic lives, it must continue to be, for talent, for integrity, and for elevation of character, the first body of men, of equal numbers, which either exists in our own or any other country in the world." "To my mind, therefore, there is no place more safe for depositing the right of the states to decide the Presidential election, than the House is."—Now, mark the change: In 1825, after his reconciliation with Gen. Jackson, and the Chieftain had dictated the course to be adopted by his followers, the same distinguished gentleman holds the following language: "It becomes a question which addresses itself to the mind and heart of every lover of his country, whether Congress (meaning the House of Representatives,) can be *safely trusted* with the choice of Chief Magistrate of this great and growing Republic." "The House," says, he, "stands condemned, because it is capable of being corrupted," and "of being tampered with"—liable to the influence of candidates —"is subject to violence, and capable of coalitions.—"This is the language of Mr. Benton's celebrated report, which recommends that the umpirage of the House of Representatives be discontinued. Now, although a comparison of the speech with the report, both in matters of fact and argument, would result greatly to the advantage of the former, (perhaps for the reason that it was produced by honest convictions,) yet, I would not absolutely insist, that the House is the safest umpire which could *possibly* be created. "The great principle for

which I contend, is, that after one trial by the people, the next shall be by states;" but, I submit, that it is highly objectionable to strip the House of Representatives of the power until a less objectionable substitute is proposed.

An alteration of the principle on which the election of President now reposes, in the manner proposed, although not literally unconstitutional, would violate a principle as high and as sacred as the Constitution itself. By depriving the small states of their power and equality in the election of President, you take away one of the principal considerations which induced them to accede to the Union, and, by consequence, dissolve their obligation to adhere to it. "Every body knows," says Col. Benton, "that without compromises, the Constitution of '87 could not have been framed, and it is fair inference, that unless these compromises are preserved inviolate, the Constitution must perish." Now, it was one of "these compromises" which gave the election of President, in the first trial, to the people, upon the Federative and Representative principles combined, and upon a second trial, referred the election to the states as equal sovereigns. The preservation of this principle, if not necessary to the existence of the Union itself, is at least indispensable "to the safety and respectability of the small states," and "imposes a salutary restraint on the ambition and violence of the powerful ones." If the federative principle, already confessedly the weakest, be not firmly maintained and supported, it will sink under the attacks of pretended friends; the states, overpowered and destroyed, will dwindle to mere corporations, or the confederacy be dissolved. There will be no hope of the durability of the Union, if the "people's men" are indulged in their work of spoliation.

The dangerous tendency of the proposition which the predicament of General Jackson seems to render expedient, and therefore acceptable to his party, cannot be better illustrated than it has been by Col. Benton, in the speech from which I have quoted. He has demonstrated, that "it is necessary to the safety and respectability of the small states that they should stand for something in the Presidential election"—"that if their rights, as now guarantied, are not preserved inviolate, the constitution must perish, and that the contingent right of voting by states is one of the main pillars which now supports the edifice of the constitution." Yet, he is willing to reduce the contingent power of this state from one twenty-fourth, to one eighty-seventh of the electoral voice of the Union; to exchange one vote out of twenty-four for three out of two hundred and sixty-one; to barter her equality with New York for one twelfth of her relative strength; to sacrifice "the respectability and safety" of the small states, (including Missouri,) and make them stand for nothing in the Presidential election. In a word, the political Sampson of the West, blinded by zeal or interest, has grasped the fairest "pillar which now supports the edifice of the Constitution," and lends his mighty powers to the demolition of the temple, and "the subversion of the government under which we live," that his new favorite may rise on its ruins.

CURTIUS.

No. V.

If the people have just cause to distrust any of the public servants, it must be those who have developed their evil propensities, by the treacherous desertion of their friends and principles, and the fawning baseness of attaching themselves to their declared enemies—men who, after having jostled, reviled, and criminated each other, in their struggles for preferment, united their skill and cunning to create and foment confusion in the administration of the government. Yet the Opposition, (who are sufficiently designated by this description,) after subduing, with wonderful forbearance, the smartings of the deep and still fresh wounds, which they had received from each other in very recent political conflicts, and endeavoring to conceal the deformities exposed by their battles, by decorating each other with the trappings of panegyric, set up an exclusive claim to public confidence; and, modestly proclaiming themselves to be the very "quintessence of integrity, wisdom, moderation, and firmness," undertake, radically, to reform the government. According to the new and sublime system of politics which they have adopted for the occasion, the National Government has been blundering in error ever since its organization under the Constitution, and a total change in the existing order of things is held essential to the preservation of the Republic. Considering, however, the very suspicious circumstances under which these unreformed gentlemen present themselves as reformers, the people (whom they have insulted by assuming to act in their name) had a right to expect some evidence of their danger in continuing a state of things under which they have prospered near forty

years, or at least a proposition for improvement commensurate with the lofty pretensions of their volunteer guardians. But, as if they expected the people to resign the use of their eyes and ears, and, without knowing why, resolve to believe every thing which might favor their ambition, they announced a list of imaginary grievances, without attempting to support them otherwise than by a parade of declamation. With apparent earnestness they undertook the task of reform, but their labors, as might have been expected, proved to be "the parturience of a mountain, and the never-failing delivery of a mouse."

During the last session of Congress, the same committee who reported the proposed amendments to the Constitution, which were considered in my last number, were instructed to inquire into the expediency of reducing the patronage of the Executive Government of the United States. This committee, with Col. Benton at their head, betook themselves to exploring the Statutes, the "blue book,' and the records of the different Departments, in search of "food for pre-conceived opinion," and, after some weeks of unremitting exertions, they discovered causes of great alarm. First, in the duty required of the Secretary of State, to cause the orders, laws, and resolutions, passed by Congress, to be published in one, and, if necessary, in three of the newspapers printed in each State. Second, in the limitation of the duration of office of the faithful collectors and disbursers of public revenue. Third, in the mode of appointing deputy postmasters. Fourth, in the manner of appointing cadets. Fifth, in the present mode of appointing midshipmen. And sixth, in the terms of the commissions of the officers of the army and navy. These, in the opinion of the committee, "tend to sully the purity of

our institutions," and are so pregnant with imminent "danger to the liberties of the country," as to require the immediate interposition of the National Legislature. Accordingly, when they travailed, they brought forth a litter of six little bills, which were read, laid on the table, and sufferred to expire for want of nourishment. The report which accompanies them, (for any reasons it contains in their support,) might have been manufactured in Dousterswivel's newly invented steam-loom for weaving novels.* It is composed almost entirely of new and not very happy combinations of the various epithets which have been employed by the Opposition, in all their reports and speeches against the Chief Magistrate. Nevertheless, the whole, taken together, may be considered as a fair specimen of the wisdom, moderation, and disinterestedness of the "people's men."

It has been the fashion of the Coalition (including their printers,) to cry down the presses authorized to publish the laws, as the hirelings of corruption. The editors who were the most troublesome and noisy in their application for selection to print "by authority," are now the most clamorous and vehement in denunciations of their successful competitors. Indeed, if the opposition are to be believed, the editors and publishers of newspapers are all Swiss, ready to support any party, or any cause, for a very small reward; and the presses, "the mov-

* According to the description of this machine, as given by the "Great Unknown," words and phrases, intended to be often repeated, are to be "placed in a sort of frame work,', and the operator changes their combination by a mechanical process, similar to "that by which weavers of damask alter their patterns," whereby any variety of declamation may be produced, while the author, "tired of the" profitless "labor of pumping his" exhausted "brains, may have an agreeable relaxation in the use of his fingers."

ing power of human action," are converted into so many engines of corruption the moment they are authorized to print "by authority." Yet, the "people's men" in the Senate, are anxious to increase the number of these *corrupt* machines, provided they have the selection of the editors to be *corrupted.* They propose, that "the number of papers to be selected to publish the laws, &c. shall not be *less* than *three* in each State, and may be equal to half the representation of each State in Congress; in each Territory, one, and in the District of Columbia, three, the selection to be made by the *Senators and Representatives* from each State, and the Delegates from Territories: the papers in the District of Columbia by the Secretary of State, *he* giving a preference to those having the greatest number of actual subscribers."* In other words, as they have exhausted their private resources in establishing a calumniator-general at Washington, they wish to create *branches* in each of the States, *at the public expense*, for the innocent purpose, doubtless, of enlightening the people in the choice of President.† It will be remarked, however, that they do

* Quere: How is the number of actual subscribers to be ascertained? It is believed that very few actually subscribe in their own proper hand-writing. The names generally are put down by the editor himself. If his list be the criterion, there are editors, whom we wot of, that have very few actual subscribers, and yet would profit by the arrangement, even though an affidavit should be required.

† Members of Congress have now, virtually, a great share of patronage, which is nominally in the President. Most of the subordinate officers, at least, are appointed upon their recommendation, and the exertion of the influence of some of them, in procuring appointments, have not had a very happy influence in establishing their own disinterestedness, or the purity of their favorites.

The appointment of late sub-agent to the Iowas, and the late Receiver for the Western Land District, may be cited as instances, which should silence the Chairman of the Committee on the subject of abuse of patronage.

not restrict themselves to the selection of papers "having the greatest number of actual subscribers:" this wholesome regulation is confined to the Secretary of State. The wisdom and disinterestedness of the contrivers of this scheme will be manifest, when it is observed, that the members of Congress in each State must necessarily be convened whenever a printer of the laws is to be selected, and it cannot be expected that they will render such important service, as they give their advice to the people *gratis*.

The committee, after the fashion of a certain speech-compiling Senator, have made a pompous display of long extracts from books in the possession of every member of the Senate, communicating information, ignorance of which, in any member of Congress, would be culpable. One of these is a long list of revenue officers, and their emoluments, taken from a register annually published "by authority," for the information of the people, which the committee call the "blue book," a nickname suggested to the learned chairman by the color of the cover, but certainly unfit to be employed in a State paper, and unworthy the dignity and gravity of "the most enlightened deliberative body in the world."—Apparently astonished at their discovery, the committee exclaim, "a formidable list indeed! formidable in numbers, and still more from the vast amount of money in their hands.—The action of such a body of men, supposing them to be animated by one spirit, must be tremendous in an election: and that they will be so animated is a proposition too plain to need demonstration." They inform the Senate, that this branch of the Executive patronage will increase, "not in arithmetical ratio, but in geometrical progression; an increase almost beyond the power of the mind [of a Senator] to calculate

or comprehend." After this, it might have been supposed, that they would recommend a reduction of the "formidable list," or, at least, a curtailment of the emoluments as the "natural remedy." No such thing. They only propose, "that the President shall lay before Congress, once in every four years, the accounts of the collectors and disbursers of the revenue, and to vacate the offices of such as have failed to account according to law—that, upon nominations to fill vacancies, occasioned by removeals, the President shall state the reason of such removals—and to repeal the act of 15th May, 1820, limiting the term of office of certain officers;" that is, they recommend no change in the existing law, except to continue in office, during good behavior, district attorneys, collectors of the customs, naval officers, surveyors of customs, navy agents, registers and receivers of the land offices, and certain officers of the general staff of the army, whose terms of service are now limited to four years.

Another bill provides "that no person shall receive the appointment of Postmaster, where the emoluments exceed a certain amount per annum, except upon the nomination of the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate." The Executive patronage is thus to be *reduced*, by taking the appointment of deputy post-masters (except the small fry) from the Postmaster-General, and vesting the power in the President and Senate —the same President, "whose spirit," they say, "will animate the actions" of officers appointed by him, "in the elections of State and Federal officers," and the very Senate which they report unfit to be trusted, because, they say, that until "the axe is laid to the root of the tree," [the constitution] and the President elected by the People, "patronage will penetrate this body, subdue its capa-

city of resistance, chain it to the car of power, and enable the President to rule as easily, and much more securely, with,than without the nominal check of the Senate."

The " tremendous power" (in elections) of the cadets and midshipmen (youths between fourteen and twenty-one years of age,) is another of the evils which " sully the purity of our institutions, and endanger the liberties of the conntry," and has, therefore, not escaped the vigilance of the " People's" committee. On this subject, they propose a brace of bills, not to diminish, but to distribute the contaminating influence of Executive patronage among the several States, by apportioning the appointment of cadets and midshipmen among them, according to the whole number of Senators and Representatives inCongress from each State—"the appointments to be so made, as that one cadet and one midshipman shall be taken from each electoral district, or one from each Congressional district, and two from the State at large, if not divided into electoral districts, and one from each territory." After this, who will doubt the wisdom of the "people's men ?"

There are, to be sure, some slight inconveniences, such as the possibility that some States will be unwilling, or unable, to furnish their quota : this may be remedied by a draft. Again : the number can never be increased, however urgent the necessity, without a new census and apportionment of Representatives, and then, perhaps, it might be required to make a new allotment, so as to have each district represented. Peradventure, the representation of some of the States in Congress may be reduced, which would require a corresponding reduction of boys representing them in the navy and the military academy. But these inconveniences

are counterbalanced by the advantages, which are, that there will be precisely as many boys in the army as in the navy, and as many little daggers in each as there are tongues in Congress—thus equalizing admirably the military, naval, and legislative departments. To complete the plan, it will only be necessary "to commit the election" of the boys, "to the direct vote of the people."

The last of the committee's bills, provides, "that the officers of the army and navy shall hold their offices during good behavior, and that no officer shall hereafter be dismissed the service but by the sentence of a court martial, or upon an address to the President by both Houses of Congress." To justify this measure, it ought to have been shown, that the power of the President, of striking officers from the rolls, has been, or is likely to be abused. It certainly has not been exercised by the present Executive, and never by his predecessors, except in flagrant cases, that of Gen. Hull, for example. Indeed the very power of arbitrarily dismissing an officer has been justly denied by the Senate, even in the case of a reduction of the army. If their proposed plan prevails, supernumerary officers could certainly not be disbanded, otherwise than by a sentence of a court martial, or an address of both Houses of Congress.

The committee inform the Senate, that the "natural remedy" for the evils of which they complain, would be, "to place the election of President in the hands of the people"—that, "considering the present mode of electing the President, as the principal source of all this evil, (namely, Executive patronage,) they had commenced their labors by recommending an amendment to the Constitution in that essential and vital particular." Despairing of success, however, they say, "not being able to lay

the axe to the root of the tree, (the conclusion,) they must go to pruning among t he limbs and branches: not being able to reform the Constitution in the election of President, they must go to work upon his powers, and trim down these by statutory enactments." The meaning of all which is, simply, that these six bills are but temporary expedients to "prune" the patronage of the present Chief Magistrate, and divide the trimmings among themselves, by way of staying their stomachs, until the happy period when the feast shall be ready, at which they expect to gratify their appetite for office, and revel in the rich honors which are to reward their disinterested labors; that happy period, when "the axe shall be laid to the root" of the Constitution—the compromises on which it reposes unsettled—the principles of the government subverted—and, as the natural consequence of anarchy or consolidation, the military chieftain (miscalled the people's candidate,") elevated to the Presidency. Then they promise us to restore all the "limbs and branches" of Executive patronage which, in the meantime, shall have been lopped off. Then the "people's men" will apprehend no danger from "Executive patronage," although it may be operating "on fifty millions of revenue," and "the civil and military officers of the Federal government shall be quadrupled," increasing "not in arithmetical ratio, but in geometrical progression." The great evil, they say say, of "an election by the States," is, that it so *corrupts* the successful candidate that he perverts the Executive patronage exclusively to the preferment of such as are either knaves at the time of their selection, or become such as soon as they are appointed, and devote themselves, and their offices, to the service of their patron. On the other hand, "an election by

the people" so *purifies* the object of their favor, that his patronage is confined to men of integrity, or, if by chance he should appoint any who are otherwise, they are immediately made worthy, and well qualified, by his purifying influence, and apply themselves exclusively to the duties of their offices, carefully avoiding any interference in "State or Federal elections." As instances of the rectifying effects of "an election by the people," the same committee have assured us, that the members of State Legislatures, chosen by "the direct vote of the people," are generally traitors to their constituents; that the members of the popular branch of Congress cannot *safely be trusted*; that they are capable of being tampered with, and were lately actually corrupted. Truly the "Report," in the language of Lord Byron,

——"Is a fine sample, on the whole,
Of Rhetoric, which the learn'd call rigmarole."

After all, it may well be doubted, whether they ever intended seriously to urge the passage of any of these bills, and certainly they never calculated on, or perhaps even wished, their adoption. Sensible of the convenience of enveloping themselves in a mist, that they may "loom large," and appear to their admiring followers of more than ordinary size, they submitted their project that they might indulge in declamation, carefully avoiding the plain ground of reason and argument, on which they would expose their diminutiveness. Surely they did not intend to throw dirt into the fountain out of which they have all been anxious to drink, and expect to slake their thirst for office, when their idol shall have the distribution of the *pure* refreshing waters. In making their feint they were careful, however, to provide for themselves, if peradventure the people should believe them to be in earnest, and take them at their word.

But the intention of the Coalition "to lay the axe to the root of the tree," (meaning the Constitution,) wears a more serious aspect. The term "election by the people," is used in contradistinction to an election by the "House of Representatives," and is artfully employed to delude the people, and cover the attack on the Federative principle of the government, which they wish to overpower and destroy. The eventual right of the States to determine the election, has always been offensive to the friends of consolidation. They have now united with those who wish to promote a favorite to the Presidency, and who, reckless of the means, are unwilling to "subvert the government under which we live," as the only hope of attaining their end. The pretence of purifying *(not reducing)* the Executive patronage of the government, is seized upon as their justification. The complaint is, that a President elected by the States, will appoint his friends to office, who in turn support him. But experience teaches us, that a President elected by the people is not more inclined to favor his enemies or slight his friends. Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, were all elected "by the people;" the first dispensed his patronage on the avowed principle of preferring the friends of his administration, and excluding his enemies. His conduct was approved, and who will impeach his integrity? Mr. Madison followed his example, and his administration has been lauded by the whole nation, except Gen. Jackson, who, when it became convenient to flatter his successor, discovered that he was not competent to preside in time of war, but that Mr. Monroe was!! The executive patronage during the administration of Mr. Monroe, seems to have been specially exercised in favoring his friends, and particularly those who had favored his pretensions in his competition with Mr. Madison, in 1812.

They were sought out and appointed to office, and some of them gave but poor specimens of integrity or talents, although their patron was *elected by the people.* Yet nobody complained of the President as either corrupt or corruptible. Between the two modes of choosing a President, regarded *merely* as means of making the best selection, there has been no opportunity of judging until the late election; wherein the States preferred as President Mr. Adams to Gen. Jackson, the statesman to the soldier; the *people* preferred as Vice-President, Mr. Calhoun to Mr. Gallatin, or Mr. Sanford, or any body else—a demagogue rather than any one of a host of patriots and statesmen. The President refuses to prostitute the Executive patronage to purchase the support of his enemies, and they "go to work upon his powers" and reputation, and propose to "trim *these* down," because he would not corrupt them. The Vice-President joins the Coalition, and prostitutes *his office* to advance their purposes, and to gratify his own unholy revenge. This political

> "Iago doth give up
> The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
> To this great council's service;"

And thus became a conspicuous member in full communion among a band of neck-or-nothing politicians, who assume the name of "people's men," that they may get the people's offices, with their appurtenances, the emoluments.

CURTIUS.

CORRECTION.----In the first line of p. 48, for "*conclusion*," read "*constitution.*"

No. VI.

Politicians who aspire to the character of statesmen, should undoubtedly possess political principles, deep-rooted in their minds, and be uniformly consistent in their practical application. Professions are indeed seldom wanting, but unfortunately they are often unsupported by corresponding practice. Some, without possessing any principles of their own, profess those which prevail in the State in which they happen, for the time being, to reside, and change their creed with every change of residence, or accommodate themselves, with wonderful facility, to any temporary exigency, and, for the occasion, repose their faith upon any principle which may, in their opinion, subserve the immediate interest of their constituents, or promote their own popularity. Others commence their political career by professing principles in perfect accordance with those of their constituents, and afterwards, by their public acts, practically deny them; and, at the same time, insult the understandings of those whom they *mis*represent, by manœuvering to keep up the appearance of consistency, with a full consciousness that their original professions were either in direct opposition to their real opinions, or that their principles (if they had any) have been changed, or prostituted, in consequence of bargains or associations, which they dare not avow. The former deserve contempt for their instability, or, perhaps, (in charity,) pity for their weakness; while the latter merit disgrace and punishment for their treachery. On mere questions of expediency, involving no constitutional principle, public servants certainly may, without just cause of imputation,

change their opinions, if it be done upon honest conviction of error. Indeed it may, and often does, on such questions, become their duty to vote against their own judgments, in obedience to the expressed will of their constituents; but questions involving the construction of the constitution admit of no such indulgence. Every man who aspires to the honor of representing the people, ought, and is presumed to, possess established principles on this subject; and as, by the theory of our government, every representative is supposed, as he is obliged by duty, to reflect the opinions of his constituents, a candidate is bound frankly to avow his political creed. If he is chosen under such circumstances, his principles are impliedly sanctioned, and he stands pledged to a strict conformity in his public acts; nor will the obligation be discharged by a mere observance of the letter, and abandonment of the substance—by setting up fanciful distinctions where there is no difference; neither is he at liberty to forsake or compromise his approved tenets, in any change of circumstances, or of rulers, much less can he surrender them to the dictation of others, without forfeiting every claim to consistency, or even political honesty, and subjecting himself to the just reprobation of his constituents. "Tried by these axioms," most of the confederates, *soi disant* "people's men," and especially the gentlemen whose erratic political course more immediately concerns the people of this State, will "stand condemned," as undeserving public confidence or support.

Repeated decisions, by overwhelming majorities in both Houses of Congress, approved by two successive Presidents, and sanctioned by nine-tenths of the people of the United States, seemed to have settled the question in relation to the contested pow-

er of Congress on the subject of roads and canals, in favor of a constitutional competency to adopt a system of internal improvement, and the expediency of exercising it. At least four of the candidates in the late Presidential election, (Adams, Clay, Jackson, and Calhoun,) favored the prevailing doctrines. The election of the first to the Presidency, and the appointment of the second to the office of Secretary of State, (although they continue true to their principles,) have produced a coalition among the disappointed, which will renew the discussion, and perhaps ultimately endanger the success of the system of improvement, unless the people interpose their authority. Jackson and Calhoun, with their adherents, determined to organize an Opposition to the Administration, but, conscious of their own weakness in numbers and in talent, thought it expedient to obtain, at any price, the co-operation of men whose principles were opposed to their own as well as to those of the Administration. A coalition was accordingly formed upon terms dictated by John Randolph, namely: That the Administration should be opposed by the confederates in every thing, right or wrong, and General Jackson supported for the Presidency at the next election—he and Calhoun, with their friends, renouncing, or at least abandoning, in practice, their tenets on the subject of the tariff, internal improvements, &c. Mr. R. soon after manifested his fidelity, by announcing, publicly, an intention to support General Jackson; but it seems that some of the contracting parties, in their anxiety to keep up appearances, and the better to delude the people, began to "play fast and loose" with their engagements; which he "of the fitful head" naturally enough mistook for duplicity, and promptly chastised them into a lively sense of the obligation of their contract, and threatened to abandon the whole of them, (Gen. Jackson included) if they did not aban-

don their support of domestic manufactures, roads, and canals.*

On the bill to aid the State of Illinois in the construction of a canal to connect the waters of Lake Michigan with those of the Mississippi, Messrs. Kane and Benton were indulged in voting for its passage, (the subject being too near home to be trifled with,) by which means a tie was produced, and the bill defeated by the casting vote of the Vice President, as it had been previously arranged it should be. Afterwards, the whole coalition, including Col. Benton, voted against, and defeated, the bill to repair the Cumberland road; by which it was proposed to put and keep in order that great avenue, then in a state of dilapidation, by collecting tolls, and to prevent or punish future injuries by the imposition of adequate penalties. This road has ever been the special favorite of the Western States, and they are equally desirous to extend and preserve it. It will also be remembered, that Col. Benton himself, while Editor of the St. Louis Enquirer, and a candidate for the Senate, in anticipation of the State Government, boasted that he had wrought upon the great National highway from its commencement, and pledged himself to continue his labor until it should reach the western confines

* Mr. Randolph is perpetually reminding his new friends of their engagements, and is provokingly careful lest his "friend indeed" should give him the slip, or, as General Jackson would say, "*forfeit* his allegiance." In his speech on the Judicial system, Mr. R. says, "But, while I vote with my friend from Missouri on this question, I wish to *hold him* [to his contract understood] when we shall come to another question---whether it be the Dismal Swamp Canal bill, or the Potomac and Ohio Canal bill, or some other of these Gerrymanderings of the States into Districts, by canals and roads." Col. Benton, it seems, was *held*, and will continue to be *held*, or forfeit his claim "to the use of any thing Mr. R. has, without the ceremony of asking leave."

of this State, or even the Pacific. It is said that he still professes the same principles, and equal zeal; that he still maintains the constitutional competency of Congress to construct roads, but denies their right to collect tolls to keep them in repair, which he contends can only be done by annual appropriations out of the National Treasury. All power on the subject of internal improvements has been denied by the opponents of the system, because, they say, none has been expressly delegated to Congress, and is, therefore, reserved to the States exclusively; consequently, its exercise by the National Government is an invasion of state rights. Col. B. insists that the contested power is clearly implied in those expressly delegated; that the construction of a road is not, but the erection of a toll-gate upon it is, an encroachment on state rights. He admits that the main power is maintained by construction—why he stops half-way, and excludes the incident, requires explanation. With submission, it would seem to be a sticking to the letter, and a surrender of the substance—an attempt to establish a distinction without a difference, which betrays a total want of confidence in the principle insisted on, and gives manifest advantage to its adversaries. A power to construct roads and canals, necessarily implies a power to repair and preserve them, and the choice of the means as a necessary incident—the greater includes the less, and the accessary follows the principal.

The course pursued by Col. Benton in relation to this subject, considered as a question of expediency, will be found to be strikingly at variance with his contemplated reform in the management of the National finances, and his pretended attachment to economy in the public expenditure. A real economist would suppose, that, after a road or canal is constructed at the common expense of all, those

who enjoy its benefits should keep it in repair. Foreign commerce pays, by the name of tonnage duty, imposts, and customs, (which are no other than taxes or tolls,) not only for the creation and preservation of its facilities, but defrays all the expenses of government, supports its credit, and is rapidly paying off the National debt. Surely it is not too much to require, that internal commerce should pay for the preservation of its facilities, after they are provided at the Nation's expense. Even correspondence between the citizens is taxed, not only to pay for the means afforded, but to enable members of Congress to transmit cart-loads of pamphlets and electioneering speeches, to subserve their private purposes without private expense. The Post Office establishment is made to support itself by taxing letters; why should not roads be kept in repair by tolls? An attempt has already been made by Col. Benton to produce excitement against the Administration, which, he says, "in these 'sky light,' or rather, sky rocket times," "is circumnavigating the globe, and vaulting against the Heavens, to find out objects of expenditure."* He even seizes on the amount of the National debt, as a topic of declamation and denunciation. Yet he continually advocates measures to multiply demands on the Treasury and diminish its resources: his plan of keeping the public roads in repair, is an exam-

* This "sky rocket" flight will be found in a pamphlet, entitled, "Speech of Mr. Benton, of Missouri, *delivered* in the Senate of the United States (in secret session,) on the mission to Panama," (first edition, p. 52, and second edition, p. 41–2,) and refers to the expense of the mission. In a note, the orator says, "this topic [and of course this terrible flourish,] was pretermitted in the *spoken* speech, but it is deemed necessary to a fair view of the mission, to insert it here, namely, in the book circulated at public expense.

ple of the one, and his scheme of giving away the public lands, of the other.

No greater amount of public money can, with any propriety, be applied to internal improvement, than will be sufficient for the gradual advancement of the system. If it is insisted, that there shall be additional appropriations for keeping them in repair, there is danger that we shall be forced to abandon them altogether, or resort to internal taxation, (direct tax and excise,) to pay off the public debt. The roads and canals now in contemplation as National works, will not only require large sums of money to construct them, but the expenses of their preservation will increase with the progress of the work, and the whole, when completed, will probably require not less than a million of dollars, annually, to keep them in repair. If those who use them for their own pleasure, or profit, were required, like those who enjoy the benefit of the Post Office establishment, to pay a small tax or toll, repairs might be made without aid from the National Treasury. Thus there might be saved (in a very short time) a sum equal to the expenses of the Panama mission, now so much complained of, by Opposition orators and editors; in a few years the annual saving would equal the whole expense of our foreign intercourse, including contingencies—and would, eventually, equal the expenses of the legislative, executive, judicial, and diplomatic departments. Surely it is better at once to resort to practicable means, and such as will certainly be adopted by the States, if the National government is compelled to abandon the system. When States, or corporations, construct roads or canals, tolls are levied not merely to keep up repairs, but for the purposes of revenue—consequently, they would be double, perhaps fourfold, what it would be necessary for the General Government to exact.

We are informed by Col. Benton, in his speech on the bill to graduate the price of public lands, that the National debt "is increased instead of diminished, for it was seventy-six millions at the end of the Revolution, and it is eighty millions now!" This statement, in the mere letter, is true; but, if taken in its spirit, and in connexion with the whole tenor of the discourse, it is evidently designed to impute to the Administration gross mismanagement of the public finances, and insinuate, that the public debt has been increased without the intervention of any cause to justify it—an artifice certainly unworthy the statesman, and unbecoming any man having no sinister designs: but his object is to persuade the people of the existence of disorders in the Government, which cannot be corrected without the aid of his herculean powers, and to effect his purpose nothing is left unessayed. No part of the public debt has been contracted by the present Administration; on the contrary, during the three first quarters of the year 1825, upwards of eleven millions of dollars were paid on account of the principal and interest. On the first day of October, 1825, the only portion remaining unpaid of the Revolutionary debt, was thirteen millions two hundred and ninety-six thousand two hundred and thirty-one dollars and forty-five cents. The residue of the public debt, contracted subsequent to the 1st of January, 1812, (being the war debt, and the loans made to pay the Florida claims, under the Treaty with Spain,) which remained unpaid on the 1st of October, 1825, was sixty millions six hundred and eighty-nine thousand three hundred and six dollars and twenty-seven cents.* So that

* See the last annual report of the Secretary of the Treasury. In the statement extracted, I have omitted the subscription of seven millions in the United States' Bank, as the government has an equivalent in an equal amount of shares in the institution.

near sixty-three millions of the Revolutionary debt, the whole of the public debt contracted between the years 1793 and 1812, including the Louisiana stock, and about one-half of that contracted since 1812, have been paid off, besides the "one hundred and thirty-six millions of dollars paid in interest."

That more has not been paid, is, perhaps, owing rather to the exertions of such politicians as Messrs. Calhoun and Benton, than any other cause. Both have contributed largely to lavish expenditures of public money; the one, by his contracts; the other by his votes and speeches, especially where favorites could be profited. The first, as Secretary at War, made the celebrated Rip-Rap contract, by which the United States lost many thousand dollars. The same economist contrived to allow Messrs. Johnsons, of Kentucky, upwards of two hundred thousand dollars (equal to five hundred dollars, or upwards, a man,) for the transportation of troops from Belle Fontaine to Council Bluffs, a distance of about five hundred miles.† The latter, as Senator, advocates measures avowedly for the sole purpose of spending "Government money" among the people. If we may judge from his public acts, he holds, that the benefits of a measure are always in proportion to the amount of public money they will occasion to be circulated. He treats the General Government as an alien enemy, and every appropriation, especially if to be expended in the west, as lawful prize: hence the frequent invasions of the treasury, no matter how impracticable, or use-

† Col. Benton denounced this transaction at the time—but his displeasure is now forgotten or appeased, and the two economists are in close alliance, *offensive*, if not defensive.

less, the ostensible object may be.* Yet these men declaim against the Administration, because the public debt is not paid, and endeavor for that cause to excite discontent among the people, and destroy their confidence in the most worthy and exalted statesmen in the nation.

The Tariff is another of the favorite measures of the western people. It was originally proposed and supported avowedly as a protection and encouragement of domestic manufactures, and *not* as a revenue measure. It seems to have been thus understood by Col. Benton, and was advocated and supported by his vote in the Senate, on its true principles. It has now been but two years in operation, and has already contributed much to the prosperity of commerce, agriculture, and manufactures. It has benefitted commerce, by decreasing imports and increasing exports, and is thus equalizing the balance of trade; it has reanimated the drooping spirits, and stimulated the enterprise, of manufactures; it has encouraged agriculturists in the pleasing prospect of a home market for the productions of the soil. Domestic manufactures have increased in quantity, and improved in quality, and will continue to increase and improve, as long as protection and encouragement are afforded, "not in arithmetical ratio, but in geometrical progression," until an ample market will be furnished the farmer and planter

* Mr. Randolph, after several times, in the same speech, reminding his friend from Missouri of his wishes on the subject of roads and canals, says, "whenever any proposition shall be got up to create expense here, there will always be some plausible reason urged for going into the expense, because somebody will always have to furnish the material." "This is the unkindest cut of all." Surely the "wonderful man" might have spared his "friend indeed" this cutting reproach.

for their produce—a prosperous commerce established in the export of manufactures—and the nation become completely independent of foreign powers, in peace and in war. It will be remembered, that this truly "American system" was originally opposed by the enemies of domestic manufactures, on the ground that it was *not* a revenue measure, but was intended as legislative protection to domestic industry, which, it was insisted, was not within the constitutional power of Congress. The inexorable r. Randolph now demands that it shall be abandoned, together with other measures, as the *sine qua non* of his adhesion to the coalition, and Col. Benton promptly renounces the principles upon which it was founded by its friends, and maintained by himself: he only tolerates its existence, for the present, as a *revenue measure*, and pledges himself to reduce it one half, when the public debt shall be paid by making donations of the public lands—he contemplates diminishing the receipts, while he continues unnecessary expenditures.

Upon an attentive examination of the facts before us, it is impossible to resist the conclusion, that the whole coalition stand pledged to oppose all internal improvements and domestic manufactures; that such of them as have heretofore professed to be their warmest supporters, have compromised their principles (real or pretended,) deserted their constituents, and surrendered themselves, unreservedly, to the dictation of the adversary. Some, indeed, are making abortive efforts to keep up the appearance of consistency, and attempt to delude the people, and escape their just indignation, by hollow pretences of maintaining their principles as originally professed, according to the letter, and setting up distinctions where there is no real difference. They admit the power to construct roads and ca-

nals, and deny all authority over them after they are made. They profess to be the friends of domestic manufactures, and acknowledge the constitutional competency of Congress to impose duties on imports, for their protection, but are opposed to any tariff which is not absolutely necessary *as a revenue measure*; which is nothing less than an attempt to compromise between their duty to their constituents and their allegiance to their faction, produced by a wish to conciliate the people, on the one hand, and a fear of the desertion of their confederates, on the other. Professing this strange compound of opposite principles, it is not surprising, that in attempting to reduce them to practice, they should find themselves bewildered and confused in the mazes of their erratic course, and be unable to extricate themselves from the difficulties with which they are environed, by their strange absurdities and irreconcileable contradictions. Such will ever be the fate of politicians, who, without fixed principles to guide, or prudence to control them, sacrifice their duty to their ambition—abandon measures for the sake of men, and stake their political hopes on the success of a desperate enterprise.

CURTIUS.

No. VII.

Statesmen who, like the President and Secretary of State, have, through a long period of public life, sustained a spotless reputation—have been distinguished throughout Europe and America, for their talents, their integrity, and their virtues, and remarkable for the candor, frankness, and fearlessness, with which they have, at all times, avowed and maintained their opinions and principles, cannot be justly suspected of designs hostile to the public good, or dangerous to the liberties or political existence of the country, until some overt act of folly or depravity is established by unquestionable evidence. Until then, those who affect to detect sinister design, artifice or stratagem, in every proposal of such men, must be considered as furnishing, by their suspicion, an undubitable token of their own political depravity, as deriving their conclusions from the consciousness of their own disposition, and imputing to others the inclination which they feel predominant in their own bosoms. Such is the source, and such the character, of all the charges alleged against the Administration by the "people's men."

Unable to obtain power, the object of all their designs, by regular means, they endeavored to prepare the public mind for their own preferment, by fabricating, and industriously circulating, calumnies designed to overwhelm with obloquy all those whose talents and virtues have secured to them public confidence. Hitherto they have been defeated as often as their charges were reduced to specific accusation, and the statesmen to whom this nation is so much indebted, rose triumphant from the contest. Though discomfited, however, they were not subdu-

ed, nor have they relinquished their favorite mode of annoyance ; but availing themselves of every opportunity to unite the disaffected, to form a " compact of union, league, and confederation," between all those whose ambition has been baffled, the commencement of the last session of Congress discovered a coalition, such as was never before witnessed, avowedly organized to oppose the Administration in all its measures, right or wrong. The nomination of ministers to Panama was seized upon as a fit occasion for renewing the attack, and this measure, dictated by the interests of the nation, sanctioned by the policy of the late President, and supported by the whole nation, was assailed by insinuations of suspicion, that the present Administration was about to engage the nation in entangling alliances, abandon its neutrality, and involve us in war.

It is not my purpose, nor is it necessary, to enter into arguments in support of the mission ; its expediency has been unanswerably vindicated, and triumphantly maintained by the President and Secretary, and by a host of disinterested Statesmen in both Houses of Congress, whose principles have not been overcome by their predilections for one man, or their dislike for another, and who are willing to judge the tree by its fruits—the Administration by its measures. A recurrence to facts, in the recollection of all, will demonstrate that the opposition to this measure does not arise from any love of country, or real apprehension of danger, but from the ambition and self-love, or the envy and revenge, of the confederates ; and, by a reference to the constitution, it will be seen that no alliance can be formed without treaty, and no treaty made obligatory without the approbation of two-thirds of the Senate ; nor can troops be raised or supplies furnish-

ed for the purposes of war, without the previous sanction of the National Legislature*—consequently, all arguments urged against this mission, on the ground that such a treaty might probably be formed, would apply with equal force to any mission whatever, and amount to objections against all foreign intercourse, which must be conducted by the agency of ministers, the President and Senate, all of whom are as liable to corruption in one case as another.

When the late President announced to the world that this nation would not view with indifference an attempt by any of the powers of Europe to interfere between Spain and her late colonies, the declaration was approved and cheered by the whole nation, and by none more heartily than by the leaders of the Opposition. Aware, however, that their present course is at war with the determination indicated in this declaration, they now affect to consider it as a mere vapouring ; and, to escape from the imputation of inconsistency, attempt to convict the late President, the people and themselves, of idle gasconade ; but it was not so considered by the Holy Alliance, or by any other nation on the globe ; it has had its effect only because this nation, in the opinion of the Allied Powers, manifestly stood pledged to second it by action. Although a recurrence to these facts is by no means necessary to justify the mission, in which an armament against the Holy Alliance cannot be contem-

* It is true that General Jackson did once appoint officers, embody troops, and muster them into the service of the United States, without any law, or even the orders of the President —a usurpation which might be repeated to a more alarming and dangerous extent, if this nation should confer on him the office of Chief Magistrate : but it is a precedent not likely to be followed by those who understand and reverence the constitution.

plated, because all apprehension of danger from that quarter has ceased ; yet it will serve to show how far the Opposition were once disposed to go, in order to guarantie the independence of the Spanish American States : whether they would have availed themselves of the pitiful subterfuge to which they now resort, to skulk out of the consequences of the pledge, if the Allies had disregarded the menacing attitude which this nation assumed, cannot now be determined. But it seems they are willing to forego all intercourse with their once favorite republics, although this nation has become immediately interested in their movements, and especially in their contemplated plan of prosecuting a just war, by invading the colonies of Spain, immediately in the vicinity of our own borders. Thus, the election of Mr. Adams to the Presidency has not only reversed their principles and changed their opinions on the policy of this Government, but has evaporated all their solicitude and enthusiasm for the new Republics.

The Assembly of American nations at Panama is known to have originated in separate treaties, formed by Colombia with other Spanish American States, Chili, Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico. The two first were promulgated in July, 1823; the third in April, 1825, and the last, in September, in the same year. They stipulate, that "an *assembly* shall be formed, composed of two plenipotentiaries for each party, in the same terms, and with the same formalities, which, in conformity to established usages, ought to be observed for the appointment of ministers of equal class, [plenipotentiaries,] near the governments of foregn natiions." The parties "oblige themselves to interpose their good offices with the governments of the other states of America, formerly Spanish, to enter into the com-

pact of union, league and confederation;" and, as soon as this great and important object has been attained, "*a general assembly* of Spanish American States shall be convened, composed of their plenipotentiaries,"* to be charged, in addition to their general powers, with certain specific duties in relation to the confederated States. It is manifest, therefore, that this *assembly* is not to be held for the purpose of forming alliances, even among the Spanish American Republics. "A compact of union, league and confederation," was formed by the same treaties which stipulate for the meeting of their plenipotentiaries at Panama, and, as soon as this great and important object," (the alliance between all the states of America, formerly Spanish,) should be attained, and *not till then*, was the general assembly to be convened.

As soon as the two first of these treaties were promulgated, the contemplated assembly attracted the attention, and excited the solicitude, of all statesmen of this Union.—By them it was thought to present a favorable opportunity for settling many important questions of national law, (at least among the nations of the two Americas,) by "the consentaneous adoption of principles of maritime neutrality." It was hoped and believed, that "the doctrine, that free ships make free goods, and the restrictions of reason on the extent of blockades," which has long been contended for by this nation, at the expense of much blood and treasure, might

* These quotations are literally taken from the translations furnished the Senate, of the treaties made by Colombia with Chili and Peru, the two first in the order of time, creating the Congress; particular words are put in *italics*, because they are considered by Col. B. material to the character and power of the assembly; and it will be seen by referring to his prefatory note, that they are truly translated according to his own showing.

be established among the American Republics; that the disastrous consequences justly apprehended by the southern states of this Union, from the contemplated invasion, and probable conquest, of Cuba and Porto Rico, by the Spanish American States, in the emancipation of the slaves, and possible renewal of the shocking scenes of St. Domingo, might be prevented. They, therefore, maintained that the policy of the United States required that they should be represented in that assembly; and when it became known, that our government had received an invitation, for this purpose, its acceptance was universally desired. The Opposition immediately seized the occasion to assail the Administration, in their favorite mode of attack. Their presses, accordingly, commended operations, by insinuations, intimating a suspicion that the public will would probably be defeated. Some of the editors in the immediate neighborhood of General Jackson, at length boldly and distinctly asserted, that the invitation would not be accepted; and, as if assured of the fact, denounced the Administration as guilty of an unpardonable offence, in contemplating a refusal. This was considered as a signal from the chief, and the Panama mission became the rallying point of the whole coalition, not (as now) to oppose, but to support it, against the Administration. When the President announced the acceptance of the invitation, they contented themselves by directing their attack on the power supposed to be asserted, to appoint ministers without the advice and consent of the Senate. But, when, afterwards, this point of attack was removed, by the nomination to the Senate, they became infuriated by their disappointment, and arrayed themselves against the once favorite mission.

Aware, however, that their consistency might

justly be questioned, the more considerate of the leaders thought it expedient to offer an apology of some sort, for the sudden revolution in their opinions, and this, as usual, was found in the irresistible arguments of their confederates. The speech of Col. Benton on this subject, (of which two entire editions have been sent by mail from Washington, and circulated in this state, to the manifest abuse of the franking privilege,) may be considered as a fair specimen of the spirit in which the Opposition has been conducted, and the mode of reasoning by which the confederates pretend to have been convinced. This gentleman commences by saying—"I had not expected to speak in this debate; and if I had spoken among the first, it would have been on a different side from that on which I now appear." Now, it will be observed, that true translations of the treaties of Colombia with Chili and Peru, which create the Congress, were published in the principal papers of the United States, as early as the year 1824, and were undoubtedly read and studied by him, long before the nomination was made; consequently, the mission, "as represented in the President's message, and the publications of the day," could not have misled him. Indeed, his determination to oppose it appears to have been made as early as that of any of the confederates; for, by a reference to the journals, it will be seen, that from the very commencement of the debate to the time his speech was delivered, (which was nearly, or quite the last,) he voted uniformly with the Opposition, in every question, including Mr. Van Buren's resolution asking the opinion of the President about the publication of documents.—The conclusion is therefore inevitable, that the decided change was not wrought in his mind by "time and reflection;" and, notwithstanding his pretence,

that it was the committee's report which "first set him a thinking," he appears to have been as ready to vote against the mission before the commencement, as after the close, of the debate.

The diplomatic character of the assembly is denied, although in the treaties it is declared to be an *assembly of plenipotentiaries*, which the orator admits to be the very definition of a diplomatic Congress, and even maintains that republics are incompetent to create any other. He insists, that the sovereignty of the nations to be represented will not be present at Panama, "for these States are republican, and republics are incapable of exercising the right of sovereignty *ex territoriality*."* The committee hold a different opinion. They say that, in a certain event, "the United States will be the first to solicit the assembling of a Congress of American States;" and the gentleman himself says, "Ministers known to the law of nations can represent the sovereignty of their nations at any point upon the globe. They may come from the four quarters of the globe, and form a diplomatic assembly." He enumerates the different grades of "ministers known to the law of nations," among which are *plenipotentiaries*, and says, "the essential character of each, and the rights of all, are equal," yet, contends that the assembly at Panama will be of unequal grades, although it is to be composed of two *plenipotentiaries* for each party, appointed with the same formalities, and commissioned in the same form and manner, as are required by *established*

* This appears to be a peculiar favorite phrase with Col. Benton, often repeated in his speech, and has probably been coined by himself, or borrowed from some foreign language. It was certainly as necessary that he should have rendered it into English, for the information of the public, as it was to give the signification of the word "*antipodes*" for the edification of the Senate.

usages, in the commission of ministers of *equal* character (grade) among other nations.* He apprehends, that entangling alliances will be entered into, yet denies the possibility that any treaty whatever can be formed by the assembly at Panama. He maintains, that "the advising power is a high one, and little less than a power to control and govern the event;" and, therefore, is unwilling to advise the appointment of plenipotentiaries, unless the Senate are permitted to "control and govern" their instructions, by way of guarding in advance against being deluded into the ratification of some disastrous treaty, and to establish the principle of controlling the Executive in the exercise of this part of his constitutional functions. But, it seems, he would be willing now to advise and consent, "that an agent, or commissioner, be sent to Panama, without diplomatic character or privilege, in the active, subtle, and penetrating form of an unofficial agent, speaking the language of the country, and establishing himself on the basis of social intercourse, *in every minister's family*"—a kind of "lobby minister," or licensed spy to "hang about" the assembly, "talk" with the ministers, and "send home reports of all he saw and did!!!" Such are the absurdities and contradictions in which gentlemen involve themselves, who prepare to speak on one side of a question, and by some untoward circumstance, (such as the controlling influence and authority of an inexorable dictator,) are forced to argue on the other.

Notwithstanding Col. Benton's anxiety to keep out of view the real causes which produced "the decided change in his mind," the nomination of

* See the Treaties as published by the Senate, particularly the two last, and Col. Benton's *literal translation* of the 15th article of that with Guatemala, perfixed to his speech.

Mr. Sergeant evidently contributed, in some degree, to produce this result. The preference of Mr. Sergeant to himself, as one of the Plenipotentiaries, seems to have been considered as an unpardonable private injury; and has brought upon the "nominee" two octavo pages of violent invective and intemperate denunciation, altogether gratuitous, or for the mere gratification of revenge for defeated hopes, as the ratification of the nomination was not then before the Senate, nor were the remarks suggested by, or in anywise apposite to, the question pending. That it was so considered by the Senate, is demonstrated by the fact, "that the vote on Mr. Anderson's nomination was (only) *one* more in his favor than there was in favor of Mr. Sergeant," and that one was Mr. Benton's, the rest of the confederates making no difference between the "nominees."

Another instance of the artifice and stratagem, as well as the consistency of our Senator, will be found in the fact, that the body of the printed speech contains more than one page devoted to the consideration of the expense of the mission; "a topic," which he confesses, in a note, "was altogether pretermitted in the *spoken* speech," as delivered in the Senate. Before the people, the *expense* is made one of the principal objections to the mission—a consideration which he was ashamed to urge before the Senators, for whose edification the speech was professedly delivered. After exhibiting a statement of the whole expense of our diplomatic intercourse with all the Spanish American States, including the Panama mission, he says, "if this is economy, I know not the meaning of the word." Thus, by interpolating in a "*speech*," *delivered* in the Senate, that which was not "*spoken*," he hopes to acquire the

name of an economist; to take advantage of the sensibility of the people on the subject of expenditure, at once to promote his own popularity and excite prejudices against the Administration.* The *real* disposition of this gentleman, on the subject of expenditure, has already been exposed in my sixth number: it may not be amiss, however, to state additional facts, which may serve fully to illustrate his claim to the character of an economist. Members of Congress are allowed, by law, eight dollars a day for their attendance, and "eight dollars for every twenty miles of estimated distance by the most usual *road*," between their place of residence and Washington, going and returning. It seems that the members of Congress have construed this act to allow a computation of distance by the course of the most crooked navigable *river*; and, under this construction, some, at least, of the members of Congress from Illinois and Missouri, (among them Col. Benton,) ascertain the distance between St. Louis and Washington to be about fifteen hundred miles, making the *usual road* follow the meanders of the Mississippi and Ohio to Wheeling; and, according to this computation, they charge and receive pay—while the real distance between the two places, estimated by what the people would understand to be the "*usual road*," does not exceed eight hundred miles. It is probable, that the compensation allowed by the plain import of the act is not sufficient; but the people have a right to be informed, by the language of the law, what they are to pay, and certainly, an economist ought not to connive at the continuance, much less

* In the "Missouri Advocate," of 31st August, there is an editorial article which improves on the speech, by charging to the Panama mission the whole expense of our foreign intercourse, with all nations, and shows that the *Senator* can only be outdone by the *Editor*.

to participate in the benefits of this left-hand mode of increasing compensation.*

The intolerant zeal with which Col. Benton commenced and prosecuted his hostility to the mission, is betrayed in his note, prefixed to the published speech. It seems that a suspicion (very unnatural to a mere inquirer after truth,) was excited in his mind against his *relation*, Mr. Clay, by whom the translations of the treaties were furnished to be sent to the Senate: "suspecting these translations to be loose and inaccurate," he applied to the Colombian Minister for, and obtained, a copy of the treaty between Colombia and Guatemala, in the original language, by which, he says, he "discovered errors far more material to the character and power of the assembly than he had supposed.† "To expose these," (and of course the *artifice* of his *relation*,) he prefixes to his speech five articles of the treaty, arranging the original, the translation sent to the Senate, and his own, in separate columns. Which of these translations is the best, it is unnecessary to inquire, since it will appear, that the two first treaties, in point of time, and as arranged among the documents sent to and published by the Senate, are correctly translated, according to his own opinion, which excludes the idea of any design "to lead the Senate" (as is alleged) "to an idea essentially erroneous upon the character of the assembly." The word *assembly* is employed in the translation of the two first, and *congress* in the two last,

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* These facts are stated upon the authority of Col. Benton's own declarations. It is due to Mr. Barton to state, that although other members of Congress charge, in the mode alluded to, he has refused to exact compensation according to it, but estimates the distance by the *usual road*.

† The errors complained of, as calcualted to lead the Senate to erroneous ideas upon the character of the assembly, are, that in the translations, *Congress* is twice used instead of *Assembly*, and the words "their" and "them" are entirely omitted—that *arbitrator* is used instead of *judge-arbitrator*; none of which supposed errors exist in the two first translations sent to the Senate. *Juez Arbitro* is, indeed, rendered *umpire*, which is at least as correct as *judge-arbitrator*.

of the treaties; the former Col. Benton contends. "has no diplomatic sense," but the latter "signifies *an assembly of plenipotentiaries.*" Unluckily for this display of erudition, the contemplated assembly is called, in two of the translations, "*a general assembly,*" and in the other two, "*a general congress* of the American states composed of their *plenipotentiaries*"—terms evidently synonymous, both indicating the diplomatic character of the assembly, in language not to be misunderstood, nor perverted by hyper-criticism. The affectation of learning, exhibited in the prefatory note, might be pardoned; but the wilful suppression of facts, for the purpose of criminating an honourable man, and that man a *relation*, cannot be excused or palliated.

Such is the spirit which animates the whole coalition; and such the means they employ to sustain themselves, and overthrow the men they hate. Some of them certainly possess, in an eminent degree, that species of courage which scorns to recoil from shame, and have persevered to the dishonour of the principles on which they formerly assumed to act, until they have been brought to the shameless avowal of a determination to oppose every measure proposed by the Administration, no matter how direct and obvious its tendency to the public good*—and all of them are "Prophets of evil, they foretell no good, but the joy of their hearts is to predict misfortunes," and, to realize their predictions, they use all implements which come to their hands, and neglect no means which promise success.

CURTIUS.

* See M'Duffie's speech on the Panama Mission, and another on the amendment to the Constitution.

TORCH LIGHT—No. VIII.

According to the fundamental principles of our government, a President elected agreeably to the provisions of the constitution of the United States, is as much the President of the people, as if he were chosen by their direct vote; because, he is elected in the mode which they have themselves prescribed for ascertaining their will; and it is an insult to them not to respect, as their decision, a choice made by their agents, exercising the powers delegated, in strict conformity to the directions of the instrument of their constitution. Indeed, nothing can be recognised as the public will, which is not constitutionally expressed as such. It was, therefore, to be hoped, that the present Chief Magistrate would, in the proper exercise of his authority, have received the support of all those who claim to be the friends of the constitution, and especially those who profess the principles upon which he has avowed his intention to administer the government; that the friends of the unsuccessful candidates would have accorded to him a liberal and rational confidence, which would have manifested their attachment to principles to be stronger than their predilections for men; and that if, by the adoption of systems, and principles, hostile to the public good, and to those professed and advocated by themselves, they were compelled to oppose his administration, they would commence their opposition with candor and dignity, and support it by truth and fair argument. These reasonable expectations have not, however, been realized. Gen. Jackson was, indeed, among the first to ex-

press his confidence in the ability and virtue of the new President—thus affording unequivocal testimony that, in his opinion, he was fairly and honorably chosen. By many it was considered a magnanimous resignation to the public will, constitutionally expressed, and a pledge, that the Administration would be judged by its measures; but it was soon after announced, that there would be "an opposition such as was never before witnessed." Such an opposition has been organized, in which General Jackson participates, and reposes his hopes of future election on the profligate arts of the coalition. Mortified by the decision of the intelligence and patriotism, he seconds their appeal to the passions and prejudices of the nation.

In a very few days after General Jackson had publicly accorded to the President the testimony of his confidence, we find his patriotism yielding to his lust of power—his principles renounced to gratify his revenge—his sense of justice overcome by his passions, and his magnanimity evaporated by the warmth of his resentment. It was due to the people of the western States, that they should be represented in the cabinet; they had given the most unequivocal testimony of their confidence in the principles, talents, and integrity of Mr. Clay, by preferring him to all others for the Presidency, and assuredly, no man in the West, or perhaps in the nation, was better qualified for the office of Secretary of State. But these considerations had no weight with General Jackson, and kicked the beam, when his supposed private injury was put in the opposite scale. It cannot be disguised, that his vote against Mr. Clay was dictated by a spirit of resentment which subdued every consideration of public good, or respect of public will. If Mr. Clay had voted for General Jackson in the House of Representatives, it would undoubtedly have been

otherwise; for, after the reconciliation of the latter with Randolph, Cobb, and Benton, there can be no doubt, but that the former might also have purchased his good opinion, if he had deserted his duty and given the lie to all he had hitherto said and done. If *all* that the worst enemies of Mr. Clay have ever charged upon him, were even conceded, (proved it cannot be,) he would lose nothing by a comparison with Mr. Benton or General Jackson, if *one half* of what they have alleged and published against each other, be true. It may, therefore, well be supposed, that he might have purchased the favor of either, or both, upon the same humiliating terms on which they have become reconciled to each other. But, Mr. Clay's opinions of General Jackson's pretensions are formed on facts established: he adopted them with deliberation, though not without reluctance—he maintains them with energy, yet with candor and dignity. With him "principles are immutable;" he chooses not to follow the example of men "changeable as weathercocks," though he has the assurance that he would thereby subdue the hostility of his most determined foes.—Those who have reason to fear the accusation of their enemies, ought, perhaps, to purchase silence at any price, but Mr. Clay's integrity, and elevation of character, secure him against all the arts of his adversaries; he has, therefore, no adequate motive to purchase exemption from their misrepresentations.

We have seen that, before the late election, most of those who are now the leaders of the Opposition, professed political principles, as well as personal predilections, of the most opposite character, and were more remarkable for their reciprocal hatred of each other, than conspicuous for their talents or virtues—that they professed no feelings in common, but hatred and envy of Mr. Clay; some, because

they had felt him in debate—others, because of his humble origin, and all, because his talents and and popularity rendered him conspicuous as a candidate for future promotion. It is, therefore, more with a view to produce his ruin, than against the Chief Magistrate, they have united their counsels and efforts.

The Vice President, disdaining all respect to public opinion, even proposed, that he and his adherents would support the administration, if the Secretary of State were dismissed. Thus their envy and hatred of one man has produced the most extraordinary coalition that ever existed—has reconciled Randolph, Van Buren and Cobb, to John C. Calhoun, *their* enemy, and the reviler of Crawford—restored Jackson, Calhoun and Benton, to the favor of Randolph, and of each other, and composed all their differences. Randolph, Cobb and Benton, all of whom have denounced Gen. Jackson, for his insatiable lust of arbitrary sway, his tyrannical abuse of power, and his total ignorance, or contempt of the constitution and laws of the land, (the latter for fifteen years his reviler, and once the humble follower of Clay,) have, with the rest, conceived a sudden attachment for the Military Chieftain, and formed a "compact of union, league and confederation," with him and his friends, to advance him to the Presidency, and bring ruin and disgrace upon Mr. Adams, and especially Mr. Clay, at all hazards; and the Chieftain, thus suddenly invested with wisdom and moderation, as if determined to emulate the treachery and baseness of his new votaries, and qualify himself for their support, distinguishes himself by the promptitude and facility with which he renounces his animosities, forsakes his principles, and attaches himself to his declared enemies.

The means which they have employed in con-

ducting their hostility, it must be admitted, are perfectly consistent with the spirit in which it was conceived. Mr. Clay is charged with corruption, because he preferred for the Presidency a statesman to a mere "military chieftain"—a man who understands and respects the provisions of the constitution, to one who stands accused, upon high authority, and, if not convicted, certainly not acquitted, of having, as a military officer, kept one army on foot contrary to orders, and levied another and appointed officers without authority of law—insulted the Governor of one state, and menaced the legislature of another; made war upon a neutral nation; violated the liberty of the citizen and of the press: put to death several individuals without the authority of law, some after a mock trial, and others without even that formality—a man who knows not the difference between an *alien* and a *citizen*, a *spy* and a *domestic traitor*; who cannot distinguish a citizen of a neutral nation, fighting in the ranks of a belligerent, from a *pirate* or *sea robber;* and who knows so little of the provisions of the constitution and laws, as to suppose, that a traitor, or pirate, is amenable to a court martial or the discretion of a military commander. All office-seekers themselves, the confederates denounce Mr. Clay for having accepted the appointment of Secretary of State, and accuse Mr. Adams of having corruptly conferred it, as a reward for services in the election—thus imputing corruption, not only to the present, but to every administration since 1801, and especially to the departed apostle of liberty, Mr. Jefferson, who appointed to office several of the members who voted for him; to Mr. Randolph, who wished to be favored in the same way, and to themselves, who are all ambitious of office, and by no means particular by whom it is conferred, or about the means by which they obtain it.

Many of them (Jackson, Calhoun, and Benton, certainly) have been the avowed advocates of internal improvements and domestic manufactures, and professed to feel for the new Republics the solicitude of partisans, and the enthusiasm of devotees; and now submit themselves to the absolute dictation of John Randolph, the consistent enemy of them all, as well as any thing else favoured by any administration for the last twenty-five years, and co-operate with him to defeat their once favorite measures. It has been shown, that, while they affect to admit the power to construct roads and canals, they deny it in substance, and contend for principles directly at war with their seeming admissions*—that the tariff, avowedly adopted as a protection to domestic industry, is now treated as a mere revenue measure, to be abandoned as soon as the state of the treasury will admit, without regard to the consequences which must ensue to manufactures—that the solicitude of the people for the new Republics, and the interest of the nation in the deliberations of the contemplated assembly at Panama, are wholly disregarded—that, instead of availing ourselves of the invitation to send ministers, it is proposed to forego all advantages which might be attained; and, instead of treating the assembled nations as sovereigns, by sending ministers of equal grade with their own, it is proposed to insult the new Republics, by treating their plenipotentiaries as a band of conspirators, and to send

*Col. Benton has felt the necessity of some effort to escape from the consequences of his course on this subject, and has republished in the Advocate of the 7th September 1825, his speech delivered in January, 1824, to prove that he is a supporter of internal improvement; and he might as well, also, republish his speech delivered about the same time on the amendments of the constitution, to prove his *present* opinions on that subject.

among them a licensed spy, a kind of commissioned eves-dropper, to hang about the assembly and betray its councils. Thus, the favorite measures of the people (of the western States, especially,) are not only abandoned, but violently opposed by the "people's candidate" and the "people's men," because they are recommended by the administration; and opposition is demanded by a few southern politicians as the consideration of their accession to the coalition.

Not content with opposing every proposition emanating from the administration, or any of its friends, they have attempted, repeatedly, to disturb the order of things as it has stood, without complaint, nearly forty years. They propose to reduce the Executive patronage, and divide it among members of Congress—to transfer a part of the Executive power to individual members of the Legislature, as the best mode of creating confusion in the administration of the government. In a desperate effort to increase the chances of promoting a military chieftain, the constitution itself has been assailed, and one of the main pillars which support that beautiful edifice attempted to be torn away. Under the specious pretence of giving the election to the people, the equality of the States is proposed to be destroyed; in the language of one of the confederates, now the chief promoter of the attack, they wish "to subvert the government under which we live, by unsettling the compromises on which the constitution reposes;" and promise us, that, when their work of spoliation shall be accomplished, the *consolidated States* shall have a chief magistrate, who, like the King of England, "can do wrong"—a man whose talents and virtues escaped detection during the first forty or fifty years of his life, and all traces of their existence either eluded the anxious researches of his biographer, or were of a

character to render oblivion desirable—a man, whose public life (if his new friends are to be relied on,) has been conspicuous for its errors or crimes, in the habitual violation of the constitution and laws of the land.

From the very commencement of the Opposition, the favorite policy of the confederates has been to assail the President and Secretary by calumny and misrepresentation, avoiding, as far as practicable, the reduction of their charges to specific accusation, that they might not be encountered and exposed by truth and fair argument. Whenever any of them have an opportunity of making what is called a speech, no matter on what subject, they never fail to introduce some topic which may serve as an apology for a strain of declamation, to eulogize each other, and denounce the Administration. But all their little arts are thrown far in the shade by their factious and profligate attempt to implicate the President and Secretary of State in the frauds meditated by the deputation of the Creek nation, with whom a treaty was concluded at Washington last winter. It seems that a treaty was signed on the 24th of January, and submitted to the Senate next day. On the 31st March, a supplemental article was concluded and submitted to the Senate, and the whole ratified by that body on the 21st April. After the original treaty was formed, Col. Benton offered his services to procure the supplemental article to be adopted, and recommended to the Secretary of War the official negotiator on the part of the United States, "to give *private gratuities* to the Creek chiefs to promote the success of the negotiation."* The Secretary, however, entirely condemned the proposition; but

* See the proceedings of the Senate, published in the "Missouri Advocate" of 31st August last.

the deputation took the hint, and confederated among themselves to practice a fraud on those who sent them, by apportioning about one hundred and sixty thousand dollars of the consideration money among themselves. Between the time of the conclusion of the original treaty and of the supplement, all these circumstances were communicated to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs,* in the War Department, by the two Cherokees. Some weeks after the treaties had been ratified, Col. Benton deemed it his duty to communicate the fact of the existence of the intended fraud to the Senate, *in secret session*, and the whole coalition immediately seized upon it for the purpose of criminating the Administration. They exonerate the Secretary at War (who negotiated the treaty) of all knowledge of the meditated fraud, although the fact was first disclosed in his Department to one of his subordinates—but allege that the Administration knew and concealed the fact from the Senate. It will, however, occur to every one, that, if any body can be supposed (without direct proof of the fact) to be consusant of the private arrangements among the chiefs, it must be the Secretary of War, or his assistant negotiator, Col. Benton, the volunteer agent, "without diplomatic character or privilege," who left his seat in the Senate to intermeddle with the negotiation; "not in the questionable and clumsy shape of a formal" commissioner, "but in the active, subtle, and pervading form of an official agent, establishing himself on the basis of social intercourse" with the members of the deputation.†

* Mr. McKenney, former editor of the Washington Republican, the personal friend and political adherent of Mr. Calhoun, and the enemy of the President and Secretary of State.

† It is, perhaps, the success of Col. Benton in this novel species of negotiation, which induced him to recommend a similar mission to Panama. (See his speech, first edition.)

The President and Secretary of State were, indeed, at Washington during the negotiation, and so were the Senators who accuse them; neither, however, had any thing to do with the treaty until it was concluded; all of them, except Col. Benton, were probably too much occupied in the duties of their respective stations, to be intermeddling with other matters, and had no other means of information, in relation to the arrangements of the deputation, than were common to every body in Washington. There is, therefore, the same evidence upon which to convict the Senators, or any body else, of connivance, as there is to impeach the Administration. If it was criminal not to detect and expose the intended fraud, what shall be said of the Senator who proposed to *bribe* the deputation, and who knew at least as much of the arrangements among the chiefs as any body else, and concealed his knowledge until the treaty was ratified? Yet the Administration is condemned, and the Senator and War Minister applauded.

Col. Benton says that "he recommended the giving private gratuities to the chiefs, *(bribery,)* as the only way of treating with barbarians. He considered the practice as sanctioned by the usage of the United States; he believed it to be common among all barbarous nations, and in many that were civilized, and referred to the article of the constitution against receiving "*presents*," as a proof that the convention thought such a restriction *necessary* even among ourselves!!!" From which it is to be inferred, that our ministers might honestly take a *bribe*, if it were not specially prohibited, and that it is perfectly honest and consistent with the dignity and honor of this nation, to bribe the diplomatic representatives of other nations. If such a practice has been sanctioned by the usage of the United States, it certainly has been

prudently concealed from the people. It is true that Mr. Talleyrand, in October, 1797, did intimate to our envoys near the government of France, that a sum of money, amounting to fifty thousand pounds sterling, would be required to be at the disposal of Talleyrand *for the pockets of the directory and ministers,* and that a loan to the French Government would also be insisted on—which terms being complied with, Mr. Talleyrand had no doubt of effecting an accommodation between the two countries. This proposed loan to the government and douceur (gratuities) to the directory, were frequently pressed upon our envoys, and, if they adverted to other points, they were told, "gentlemen, you do not speak to the point, *it is money ;* it is expected that you will offer money ;" to which they uniformly replied, "no, no—not a sixpence." Notwithstanding the anxiety of this nation to avoid a conflict with France, it was not, in those days, thought to be consistent with its dignity and honor to promote the success of the negotiation by *bribery*—nor do I believe that the United States have, in any case, resorted to filling the pockets of ministers with private gratuities, by way "of producing conviction on their minds." It is said, however, that the unofficial negotiator who recommends it, is to be Secretary of State when Gen. Jackson is President ; it is, therefore, possible, though not very probable, that, at some future period, our negotiations will be conducted after the manner of Talleyrand, in all things except talent—and annual appropriations become necessary for "*private gratuities*" to ministers of foreign nations.

The party who thus continually assail the Administration, and lay in wait for an opportunity of seizing on the government, *per fas aut nefas,* by fair or foul means, is chiefly composed of men in all respects eminently qualified for the enterprise,

by the possession of much courage and considerable talents, without patriotism or political principle. Their confederacy is accurately described in Gen. Foy's definition of an aristocracy of the nineteenth century : " a league or coalition of those who wish to consume without producing, occupy all public places without being competent to fill them, and seizing upon all honors without meriting them." Tyrants when in power, demagogues when out, the real people will find it wise to resist them on the advanced ground, before they obtain a lodgment in some outwork of the constitution, whence they may direct a dangerous, and perhaps successful attack against the citadel itself. This republic can be successfully assailed only by gradual inroads on the principles of government : every attempt at encroachment should, therefore, be promptly resisted, lest artful and aspiring demagogues obtain sway, and establish arbitrary power under the name of the people.

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